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CHAPTER IV.

BESSIE IS ASKED IN MARRIAGE.

IN due course John Niel got over his sprained ankle and the other injuries inflicted on him by the infuriated cock ostrich (it is, by the way, a humiliating thing to be knocked out of time by a feathered fowl), and set to work to learn the routine of farm life. He did not find this a disagreeable task, especially when he had so fair an instructress as Bessie, who knew all about it, to show him the way in which he should go. Naturally of an energetic and hard-working temperament, he very soon got more or less into the swing of the thing, and at the end of six weeks began to talk quite learnedly of cattle and ostriches and sweet and sour veldt. About once a week or so Bessie used to put him through a regular examination as to his progress; also she gave him lessons in Dutch and Zulu, both of which tongues she spoke to perfection; so it will be seen that he did not lack for pleasant and profitable employment. Another thing was that he grew much attached to old Silas Croft. The old gentleman, with his handsome, honest face, his large and varied stock of experience, and his sturdy English character, made a great impression on his mind. He had never met a man quite like him before. Nor was the liking unreciprocated, for his host took a wonderful fancy to John Niel. 'You see, my dear,' he explained to his niece Bessie, 'he's quiet, and he doesn't know much about farming, but he's willing to learn, and he's such a gentleman.

Now, where one has Kafirs to deal with, as on a place like this, you must have a gentleman. Your mean white will never get anything out of a Kafir; that's why the Boers kill them and flog them, because they can't get anything out of them without. But you see Captain Niel gets on well enough with them. I think he'll do, my dear, I think he'll do,' and Bessie quite agreed with him. And so it came to pass that after this six weeks' trial the bargain was finally struck, and John paid over his thousand pounds and took a third interest in Mooifontein.

Now it is not possible, in a general way, for a youngish man like John Niel to live in the same house with a young and lovely woman like Bessie Croft without running more or less risk of entanglement. More especially is this so where the two people have little or no outside society or distraction to divert the attention from each other. Not that there was as yet at any rate the slightest hint of affection between them. Only they liked one another very much, and found it pleasant to be a good deal together. In short, they were walking along that easy, winding road that leads to the mountain paths of love. It is a very broad road, like another road that runs elsewhere, and, also like this last, it has a wide gate. Sometimes, too, it leads to destruction. But for all that it is a most agreeable one to follow hand-in-hand, winding as it does through the pleasant meadows of companionship. The view is rather limited, it is true, and homelike—full of familiar things. There stand the kine, knee-deep in the grass: there runs the water; and there grows the corn. Also one can stop if one likes. By-and-by it grows different. By-and-by, when the travellers tread the heights of passion, precipices will yawn and torrents rush, lightnings will fall and storms will blind; and who can know that they will attain at last to that far-off peak, crowned with the glory of a perfect peace which men call Happiness? There are those who say it never can be reached, and that the halo which rests upon its slopes is no earthly light, but rather, as it were, a promise and a beacon—a glow reflected whence we know not, and lying on this alien earth as the sun's light lies on the dead bosom of the moon. Some say, again, that they have climbed its topmost pinnacle and tasted of the fresh breath of heaven that sweeps around its heights—ay, and heard the quiring of immortal harps and the swan-like sigh of angels' wings; and then behold! a mist has fallen upon them, and they have wandered in it, and when it cleared they were on the mountain paths again, and the peak was far

away. And a few there are who tell us that they live there always, listening to the voice of God; but these are old and worn with journeying—men and women who have outlived passions and ambitions and the fire heats of love, and who now, girt about with memories, stand face to face with the sphinx Eternity.

But John Niel was no chicken, nor very likely to fall in love with the first pretty face he met. He had once, years ago, gone through that melancholy stage, and there, he thought, was an end of it. Another thing was that if Bessie attracted him, so did Jess in a different way. Before he had been a week in the house he had come to the conclusion that Jess was the strangest woman he had ever met, and in her own way one of the most attractive. Her very impassiveness added to her charm; for who is there in this world who does not like to learn a secret? To him Jess was a riddle of which he did not know the key. That she was clever and well-informed he soon discovered from her rare remarks; that she could sing like an angel he also knew; but what was the main-spring of her mind—round what axis did it revolve—that was what puzzled him. Clearly enough it was not like most women's, least of all like happy, healthy, plain-sailing Bessie. So curious did he become to fathom these mysteries that he took every opportunity to associate with her, and would even, when he had time, go out with her on her sketching, or rather flower-painting, expeditions. On these occasions she would sometimes begin to talk, but it was always about books, or England, or some intellectual question. She never spoke of herself.

Yet it soon became evident to John that she liked his society, and missed him when he did not come. It never occurred to him what a boon it was to a girl of considerable intellectual attainments, and still greater intellectual capacities and aspirations, to be thrown for the first time into the society of a cultivated and intelligent gentleman. John Niel was no empty-headed, one-sided individual. He had both read and thought, and even written a little, and in him Jess found a mind which, though of an inferior stamp, was more or less kindred to her own. Although he did not understand her she understood him, and at last, had he but known it, there rose a far-off dawning light upon the twilight of her mind that thrilled and changed it as the first faint rays of morning thrill and change the darkness of the night. What if she should learn to love this man, and teach him to love her? To most women such a thought involves more or less the idea of marriage,

and that change of status which they generally consider so desirable. But Jess did not think much of that: what she did think of was the blessed possibility of being able to lay down her life, as it were, in the life of another—of finding at last somebody who understood her and whom she could understand, who would cut the shackles that bound down the wings of her genius, so that she could rise and bear him with her as, in Bulwer Lytton's beautiful story, Zoe would have borne her lover. Here at last was a man who *understood*, who was something more than an animal, and who possessed the god-like gift of brains, the gift that had been more of a curse than a blessing to her, lifting her above the level of her sex and shutting her off as by iron doors from the understanding of those around her. Ah! if only this perfect love of which she had read so much would come to him and her, life might perhaps grow worth the living.

It is a curious thing, but in such matters most men never learn wisdom from experience. A man of John Niel's age might have guessed that it is dangerous work playing with explosives, and that the quietest, most harmless-looking substances are sometimes the most explosive. He might have known that to set to work to cultivate the society of a woman with such tell-tale eyes as Jess's was to run the risk of catching the fire from them himself, to say nothing of setting her alight: he might have known that to bring all the weight of his cultivated mind to bear on her mind, to take the deepest interest in her studies, to implore her to let him see the poetry Bessie told him she wrote, but which she would show to no living soul, and to evince the most evident delight in her singing, were one and all dangerous things to do; and yet he did them and thought no harm.

As for Bessie, she was delighted that her sister should have found anybody whom she cared to talk to or who could understand her. It never occurred to her that Jess might fall in love. Jess was the last person in the world to fall in love. Nor did she calculate what the results might be to John. As yet, at any rate, she had no interest in Captain Niel—of course not.

And so things went on pleasantly enough to all concerned in this drama till one fine day when the storm-clouds began to gather. John had been about the farm as usual till dinner time, after which he took his gun and told Jantjé to saddle up his shooting pony. He was standing on the verandah, waiting for the pony to appear, and by him was Bessie, looking particularly attractive in a white

dress, when suddenly he caught sight of Frank Muller's great black horse, and that gentleman himself upon it, cantering up the avenue of blue gums.

'Hullo, Miss Bessie,' he said, 'here comes your friend.'

'Bother!' said Bessie, stamping her foot, and then, with a quick look, 'Why do you call him my friend?'

'I imagine that he considers himself so, to judge from the number of times a week he comes to see you,' he answered with a shrug. 'At any rate, he isn't mine, so I am off shooting. Good-bye. I hope that you will enjoy yourself.'

'You are not kind,' she said in a low voice, and turning her back on him.

In another moment he was gone, and Frank Muller had arrived.

'How do you do, Miss Bessie?' he said, jumping from his horse with the rapidity of a man who had been accustomed to rough riding all his life. 'Where is the "rooibaasje" off to?'

'Captain Niel is going out shooting,' she said coldly.

'Ah, so much the better for you and me, Miss Bessie! We can have a pleasant talk. Where is that black monkey Jantjé? Here, Jantjé, take my horse, you ugly devil, and mind you look after him, or I'll cut the liver out of you!'

Jantjé took the horse, with a forced grin of appreciation at the joke, and led him off round the house.

'I don't think that Jantjé likes you, Meinheer Muller,' said Bessie, spitefully, 'and I don't wonder at it if you talk to him like that. He told me the other day that he had known you for twenty years,' and she looked at him inquiringly.

This casual remark produced a remarkable effect on her visitor, who turned colour beneath his tanned skin.

'He lies, the black hound,' he said, 'and I'll put a bullet through him if he says it again! What should I know about him, or he about me? Can I keep count of every miserable man-monkey I meet?' and he muttered a string of Dutch oaths into his long beard.

'Really, Meinheer!' said Bessie.

'Why do you always call me "Meinheer"? ' he asked, turning so fiercely on her that she started back a step. 'I tell you I am not a Boer. I am an Englishman. My mother was English; and besides, thanks to Lord Carnarvon, we are all English now.'

'I don't see why you should mind being thought a Boer,' she said coolly: 'there are some very good people among the Boers, and besides, you used to be a great "patriot."'

'Used to be—yes; and so the trees used to bend to the north when the wind blew that way, but now they bend to the south, for the wind has turned. By-and-by it may set to the north again—that is another matter—then we shall see.'

Bessie made no answer beyond pursing up her pretty mouth and slowly picking a leaf from the vine that trailed overhead.

The big Dutchman took off his hat and stroked his beard perplexedly. Evidently he was meditating something that he was afraid to say. Twice he fixed his cold eyes on Bessie's fair face, and twice looked down again. The second time she took alarm.

'Excuse me one minute,' she said, and made as though to enter the house.

'Wacht een beeche' (wait a bit), he ejaculated, breaking into Dutch in his agitation, and even catching hold of her white dress with his big hand.

She drew the dress from him with a quick twist of her lithe form, and turned and faced him.

'I beg your pardon,' she said, in a tone that could not be called encouraging: 'you were going to say something.'

'Yes—ah, that is—I was going to say—' and he paused.

Bessie stood with a polite look of expectation on her face, and waited.

'I was going to say—that, in short, that I want to marry you!'

'Oh!' said Bessie, with a start.

'Listen,' he went on hoarsely, his words gathering force as he went, as is the way even with uncultured people when they speak from the heart. 'Listen! I love you, Bessie; I have loved you for three years. Every time I have seen you I have loved you more. Don't say me nay—you don't know how I do love you. I dream of you every night; sometimes I dream that I hear your dress rustling, and then you come and kiss me, and it is like being in heaven.'

Here Bessie made a gesture of disgust.

'There, I have offended you, but don't be angry with me. I am very rich, Bessie; there is the place here, and then I have four farms in Lydenburg and ten thousand morgen up in Waterberg, and a thousand head of cattle, besides sheep and horses and money in the bank. You shall have everything your own way,' he went on, seeing that the inventory of his goods did not appear to impress her—'everything—the house shall be English fashion; I will build a new "sit-kamé"'—(sitting-room)—'and it shall be

furnished from Natal. There, I love you, I say. You won't say no, will you?' and he caught her by the hand.

'I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Muller,' answered Bessie, snatching away her hand, 'but—in short, I cannot marry you. No, it is no use, I cannot indeed. There, please say no more—here comes my uncle. Forget all about it, Mr. Muller.'

Her suitor looked up; there was old Silas Croft coming sure enough, but he was some way off, and walking slowly.

'Do you mean it?' he said beneath his breath.

'Yes, yes, of course I mean it. Why do you force me to repeat it?'

'It is that damned rooibaasje,' he broke out. 'You used not to be like this before. Curse him, the white-livered Englishman! I will be even with him yet; and I tell you what it is, Bessie: you shall marry me, whether you like it or no. Look here, do you think I am the sort of man to play with? You go to Wakkerstroom and ask what sort of a man Frank Muller is. See, I want you—I must have you. I could not live if I thought that I should never get you for myself. And I tell you I will do it. I don't care if it costs me my life, and your rooibaasje's too. I'll do it if I have to stir up a revolt against the Government. There, I swear it by God or by the Devil, it's all one to me!' And growing inarticulate with passion, he stood there before her clinching and unclenching his great hand, and his lips trembling.

Bessie was very frightened; but she was a brave woman, and rose to the occasion.

'If you go on talking like that,' she said, 'I shall call my uncle. I tell you that I will not marry you, Frank Muller, and that nothing shall ever make me marry you. I am very sorry for you, but I have not encouraged you, and I will never marry you—never!'

He stood for half a minute or so looking at her, and then burst into a savage laugh.

'I think that some day or other I shall find a way to make you,' he said, and, turning, went without another word.

A couple of minutes later Bessie heard the sound of a horse galloping, and looking up saw her wooer's powerful form vanishing down the vista of blue gums. Also she heard somebody crying out as though in pain at the back of the house, and, more to relieve her mind than anything else, went to see what it was. By the stable door she found the Hottentot Jantjé, twisting round

and round and shrieking and cursing, holding his hand to his side, from which the blood was running.

‘What is it?’ she asked.

‘Baas Frank!’ he said—‘Baas Frank hit me with his whip!’

‘The brute!’ said Bessie, the tears starting into her eyes with anger.

‘Never mind, missie, never mind,’ said the Hottentot, his ugly face growing livid with fury, ‘it is only one more to me. I cut it on this stick’—and he held up a long thick stick he carried, on which were several notches, starting from three deep ones at the top just below the knob. ‘Let him look out sharp—let him search the grass—let him creep round the bush—let him look as he will, one day he will find Jantjé, and Jantjé will find him!’

‘Why did Frank Muller gallop away like that?’ asked her uncle of Bessie when she got back to the verandah.

‘We had some words,’ she answered shortly, not seeing the use of explaining matters to the old man.

‘Ah, indeed, indeed. Well, be careful, my love. It’s ill to quarrel with a man like Frank Muller. I’ve known him for many years, and he has a black heart when he is crossed. You see, my love, you can deal with a Boer and you can deal with an Englishman, but cross-bred dogs are bad to handle. Take my advice, and make it up with Frank Muller.’

All of which sage advice did not tend to raise Bessie’s spirits, which were already sufficiently low.

CHAPTER V.

DREAMS ARE FOOLISHNESS.

WHEN John Niel left Bessie on the verandah at the approach of Frank Muller he had taken his gun, and, having whistled to the pointer dog Pontac, mounted his shooting pony and started out in quest of partridges. On the warm slopes of the hills round Wakkerstroom a large species of partridge is very abundant, especially in the patches of red grass in which they are sometimes clothed. It is a merry sound to hear these partridges calling from all directions just after daybreak, and one to make the heart of every true sportsman rejoice exceedingly. On leaving the house John proceeded up the side of the hill behind it—his pony picking its way carefully between the stones, and the dog Pontac ranging

about two or three hundred yards off, for in this sort of country it is necessary to have a dog with a wide range. Presently John saw him stop under a mimosa thorn and suddenly stiffen out as if he had been petrified, and made the best of his way towards him. Pontac stood still for a few seconds, and then slowly and deliberately veered his head round as though it worked on a hinge to see if his master was coming. John knew his ways. Three times would that remarkable old dog look round thus, and if the gun had not then arrived he would to a certainty run in and flush the birds. This was a rule that he never broke, for his patience had a fixed limit. On this occasion, however, John arrived before it was reached, and, jumping off his pony, cocked his gun and marched slowly up, full of happy expectation. On drew the dog, his eye cold and fixed, saliva dropping from his mouth, and his head and face, on which was frozen an extraordinary expression of instinctive ferocity, outstretched to their utmost limit.

He was right under the mimosa thorn now and up to his belly in the warm red grass. Where could the birds be. *Whirr!* and a great feathered shell seemed to have burst at his very feet. What a covey! twelve brace if there was a bird, and they had all been lying beak to beak in a space no bigger than a cartwheel. Up went John's gun and off too, a little sooner than it should have done.

'Missed him clean! Now then for the left barrel.' Same result. There, we will draw a veil over the profanity that ensued. A minute later and it was all over, and John and Pontac were regarding each other with contempt and disgust.

'It was all you, you brute,' said John to Pontac. 'I thought you were going to run in, and you hurried me.'

'Ugh!' said Pontac to John, or at least he looked it. 'Ugh! you disgusting bad shot. What is the good of pointing for you? It's enough to make a dog sick.'

The covey—or rather the collection of old birds, for this kind of partridge sometimes 'packs' just before the breeding season—had scattered all about the place, and it was not long before Pontac found some of them; and this time John got one bird—and a beautiful great partridge he was too, with yellow legs—and missed another. Again Pontac pointed, and a brace rose. Bang! down goes one; bang! with the other barrel. Caught him, by Jove, just as he topped the stone. Hullo! Pontac is still on the point. Slip in two more cartridges. Oh, a leash this

time! bang! bang! and down come a brace of them—two brace of partridge without moving a yard.

Life has joys for all men, but it has, I verily believe, no joy to compare to the joy of the moderate shot and earnest sportsman when he has just killed half a dozen driven partridges without a miss, or ten rocketing pheasants with eleven cartridges, or, better still, a couple of woodcock right and left. Sweet to the politician are the cheers to announce the triumph of his cause and of himself; sweet to the desponding writer is the unexpected public recognition in the 'Saturday Review' of talents with which nobody had previously been much impressed; sweet to all men is the light of women's eyes and the touch of women's lips. But though he have experienced all these things, to the true sportsman and the *moderate shot*, sweeter far is it to see the arched wings of the driven bird bent like Cupid's bow come flashing fast towards him, to feel the touch of the stock as it fits itself against the shoulder, and the kindly give of the trigger, and then, oh thrilling sight! to perceive the wonderful and yet awful change from life to death, the puff of feathers, and the hurtling passage of the dull mass borne onward by its own force to fall twenty yards from where the shot struck it. Next session the politician will be hooted down, next year perhaps the 'Saturday Review' will cut the happy writer to ribbons and decorate its columns with his fragments, next week you will have wearied of those sweet smiles, or, more likely still, they will be bestowed elsewhere. Vanity of vanities, my son, each and all of them! But if you are a true sportsman (yes, even though you be but a moderate shot), it will always be a glorious thing to go out shooting, and when you chance to shoot well earth holds no such joy as that which will glow in your honest breast (for all sportsmen are honest), and it remains to be proved if heaven does either. It is a grand sport, though the pity of it is that it should be such a cruel one.

Such was the pæan that John sang in his heart as he contemplated those fine partridges before lovingly transferring them to his bag. But his luck to-day was not destined to stop at partridges, for hardly had he ridden over the edge of the boulder-strewn side, and on to the flat table-top of the hill which consisted of some five hundred acres of land, before he perceived, emerging from the shelter of a tuft of grass about a hundred and seventy yards away, nothing less than the tall neck and whiskered head of a large 'pauw' or bustard.

Now it is quite useless to try to ride straight up to a bustard, and this he knew. The only thing to do is to excite his curiosity and fix his attention by moving round and round him in an ever-narrowing circle. Putting his pony to a canter, John proceeded to do this with a heart beating with excitement. Round and round he went; the 'pauw' had vanished now, he was squatting in the tuft of grass. The last circle brought him to within seventy yards, and he did not dare risk it any more, so jumping off his pony he ran in towards the bird as hard as ever he could go. Before he had covered ten yards the 'pauw' was rising, but they are heavy birds, and he was within forty yards before it was fairly on the wing. Then he pulled up and fired both barrels of No. 4 into it. Down it came, and, incautious man, he rushed forward in triumph without reloading his gun. Already was his hand outstretched to seize the prize, when, behold! the great wings stretched themselves out and the bird was flying away. John stood dancing upon the veldt, but observing that it settled within a couple of hundred yards, ran back, mounted his pony, and pursued it. When he got near it it rose again, and flew this time a hundred yards only, and so it went on till at last he got within gun-shot of the king of birds and killed it.

By this time he was right across the mountain-top, and on the brink of the most remarkable chasm he had ever seen. The place was known as Lion's Kloof, or Leeu Kloof in Dutch, because three lions had once been penned up by a party of Boers and shot there. The chasm or gorge was between a quarter and half a mile long, about six hundred feet in width, and a hundred and fifty to a hundred and eighty feet deep. It evidently owed its origin to the action of running water, for at its head, just to the right of where John Niel stood, a little stream welling from hidden springs in the flat mountain-top trickled from strata to strata, forming a series of crystal pools and tiny waterfalls, till at last it reached the bottom of the mighty gorge, and pursued its way, half-hidden by the umbrella-topped mimosa and other thorns that were scattered about, through it to the plains beyond. Evidently this little stream was the parent of the gulf it flowed down and through, but how many centuries of patient, never-ceasing flow, wondered John Niel, must have been necessary to the vast result before him? First centuries of saturation of the soil piled on and between the bed rocks that lay beneath it and juttied up through it, then centuries of floods caused by rain and perhaps by melting

snows, to wash away the loosened mould; then centuries upon centuries more of flowing and of rainfall to wash the débris clean and complete the colossal work.

I say the rocks that jutted up through the soil, for the gulf was not clean cut. All along its sides, and here and there in its arena, stood up mighty columns or fingers of rock, not solid columns, but columns formed by huge boulders piled mason fashion one upon another, as though the Titans of some dead age had employed themselves in building them up, overcoming their tendency to fall by the mere crushing weight above, that kept them steady even when the wild breath of the storms came howling down the gorge and tried its strength against them. About a hundred paces from the near end of the gorge, some ninety or more feet in height, stood the most remarkable of these mighty pillars, to which the remains at Stonehenge are but toys. It was formed of seven huge boulders, the largest, that at the bottom, about the size of a moderate cottage, and the smallest, that at the top, perhaps some eight or ten feet in diameter. These boulders were rounded like a cricket-ball—evidently through the action of water—and yet the hand of Nature had contrived to balance them, each one smaller than that beneath, the one upon the other, and to keep them so. But this was not always the case. For instance, a very similar mass that had risen on the near side of the perfect pillar had fallen, all except the two bottom stones, and the boulders that went to form it lay scattered about like monstrous petrified cannon-balls. One of these had split in two, and seated on it John discovered none other than Jess Croft, apparently engaged in sketching, looking very small and far off at the bottom of that vast chasm.

John got off his shooting pony, and looking about him perceived that it was possible to descend by following the course of the stream and clambering down the natural steps it had cut in the rocky bed. Throwing the reins over the pony's head, and leaving him with the dog Pontac to stand and look about him as South African shooting ponies are accustomed to do, he put down his gun and game and proceeded to descend, pausing every now and again to admire the wild beauty of the scene and look at the hundred varieties of moss and ferns, the last mostly of the maiden-hair (*capilla veneris*) genus, that clothed every cranny and every rock where they could find roothold and get refreshment from the water or the spray of the cascades. As he drew near the bottom of the gorge he saw

that near the borders of the stream, wherever the soil was moist, grew thousands upon thousands of white arum lilies, 'pig lilies' they call them there, just now in full bloom. He had noticed these lilies from above, but there they had, owing to the distance, looked so small that he had taken them for everlastings or anemones. He could not see Jess now, for she was hidden by a bush that grows by the banks of the streams in South Africa in low-lying land, and which at certain seasons of the year is literally covered with masses of the most gorgeous scarlet bloom. His footsteps fell very softly on the moss and flowers, and when he got round the glorious-looking bush it was evident that she had not heard him, for she was asleep. Her hat was off, but the bush shaded her, and her head had fallen forward over her sketching block and rested on her hand. A ray of light that came through the bush played upon her curling brown hair and threw warm shadows on her white face and the white wrist and hand on which it rested.

John stood opposite to her and looked at her, and the old curiosity took possession of him to understand this feminine enigma. Many a man before him has been the victim of a like desire, and lived to regret that he did not leave it ungratified. It is not well to try and lift the curtain of the unseen, it is not well to call to heaven to show its glory, or to hell to give us touch and knowledge of its yawning fires. Knowledge comes soon enough; many of us will say that knowledge has come too soon and left us desolate. There is no bitterness like the bitterness of wisdom: so cried the great Koholeth, and so hath cried many a son of man following blindly on his path. Let us be thankful for the dark places of the earth—places where we may find rest and shadow, and the heavy sweetness of the night. Seek not after mysteries, O son of man, be content with the practical and the proved and the broad light of the day; peep not, mutter not the words of awakening. Understand her who would be understood and is comprehensible to those who run, and for the others let them be, lest your fate should be as the fate of Eve, and as the fate of Lucifer, star of the morning. For here and there there is a human heart from which it is not wise to draw the veil—a heart in which many things slumber as undreamed dreams in the brain of the sleeper. Draw not the veil, whisper not the word of life in the silence where all things sleep, lest in that kindling breath of love and pain dim shapes arise, take form, and fright thee.

A minute or so might have passed when suddenly, and with a

little start, Jess opened her great eyes, on which the shadow of darkness lay, and gazed at him.

'Oh!' she said with a little tremor, 'is it you or is it my dream?'

'Don't be afraid,' he answered cheerily, 'it is I—in the flesh.'

She covered her face with her hand for a moment, and then withdrew it, and he noticed that her eyes had changed curiously in that moment. They were still large and beautiful as they always were, but there was a change. Just now they had seemed as though her soul were looking through them. Doubtless it was because the pupils were enlarged by sleep.

'Your dream! What dream?' he asked, laughing.

'Never mind,' she answered in a quiet sort of way that excited his curiosity more than ever: 'dreams are foolishness.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORM BREAKS.

'Do you know, you are a very odd person, Miss Jess,' John said presently, with a little laugh. 'I don't think you can have a happy mind.'

She looked up. 'A happy mind?' she said. 'Who can have a happy mind? Nobody who can feel. Supposing,' she went on after a pause—'supposing one puts oneself and one's own little interests and joys and sorrows quite away, how is it possible to be happy, when one feels the breath of human misery beating on one's face, and sees the great tide of sorrow and suffering creeping up to one's feet? One may be on a rock oneself and out of the path of it, till the spring floods or the hurricane wave comes to sweep one away, or one may be afloat upon it: whichever it is, it is quite impossible, if one has any heart, to be indifferent to it.'

'Then only the indifferent are happy?'

'Yes, the indifferent and the selfish; but, after all, it is the same thing: indifference is the perfection of selfishness.'

'I am afraid that there must be lots of selfishness in the world, for there is certainly plenty of happiness, all evil things notwithstanding. I should have said that happiness comes from goodness and from a sound digestion.'

Jess shook her head as she answered, 'I may be wrong, but I don't see how anybody who feels can be quite happy in a world of

sickness, suffering, slaughter, and death. I saw a Kafir woman die yesterday, and her children crying over her. She was a poor creature and had a rough lot, but she loved her life, and her children loved her. Who can be happy and thank God for his creation when he has just seen such a thing? But there, Captain Niel, my ideas are very crude, and I dare say very wrong, and everybody has thought them before: at any rate, I am not going to inflict them on you. What is the use of it?' she went on with a laugh: 'what is the use of anything? The same old thoughts passing through the same human minds from year to year and century to century, just as the same clouds float across the same blue sky. The clouds are born in the sky, and the thoughts are born in the brain, and they both end in tears and re-arise in blinding, bewildering mist, and this is the beginning and end of thoughts and clouds. They arise out of the blue; they overshadow and break into storms and tears, and then they are drawn up with the blue again, and the whole thing begins afresh.'

'So you don't think that one can be happy in the world?' he asked.

'I did not say that—I never said that. I do think that happiness is possible. It is possible if one can love somebody so hard that one can quite forget oneself and everything else except that person, and it is possible if one can sacrifice oneself for others. There is no true happiness outside of love and self-sacrifice, or rather outside of love, for it includes the other. That is gold, all the rest is gilt.'

'How do you know that?' he asked quickly. 'You have never been in love.'

'No,' she answered, 'I have never been in love like that, but all the happiness I have had in my life has come to me from loving. I believe that love is the secret of the world: it is like the philosopher's stone they used to look for, and almost as hard to find, but when one finds it it turns everything to gold. Perhaps,' she went on with a little laugh, 'when the angels left the earth they left us love behind, that by it and through it we may climb up to them again. It is the one thing that lifts us above the brutes. Without love man is a brute, and nothing but a brute; with love he draws near to God. When everything else falls away the love will endure because it cannot die while there is any life, if it is true love, for it is immortal. Only it must be true—you see it must be true.'

He had got through her reserve now; the ice of her manner broke up beneath the warmth of her words, and her usually impassive face had caught the life and light from the eyes above, and acquired a certain beauty of its own. He looked at it, and realised something of the untaught and ill-regulated intensity and depth of the nature of this curious girl. He caught her eyes and they moved him strangely, though he was not an emotional man, and was too old to experience spasmodic thrills at the chance glances of a pretty woman. He went towards her, looking at her curiously.

‘It would be worth living to be loved like that,’ he said, more to himself than to her.

She did not answer, but she let her eyes rest on his. Indeed, she did more, for she put all her soul into them and gazed and gazed till John Niel felt as though he were being mesmerised. And as she did so there rose up in her breast a knowledge that if she willed it she could gain this man’s heart and hold it against all the world, for her nature was stronger than his nature, and her mind, untrained as it was, encompassed his mind and could pass over it and beat it down as the wind beats down a tossing sea. All this she learnt in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: she did not know how she knew it, but she did know it as surely as she knew that the blue sky stretched overhead, and, what is more, he—for the moment, at any rate—knew it too. It came on her as a shock and a revelation, like the tidings of a great joy or grief, and for a moment left her heart empty of all things else.

She dropped her eyes suddenly.

‘I think,’ she said quietly, ‘that we have been talking a great deal of nonsense, and that I want to finish my sketch.’

He got up and left her, for he had to get home, saying as he did so that he thought there was a storm coming up, the air was so quiet, and the wind had fallen as it does before an African tempest, and presently on looking round she saw him slowly climbing the precipitous ascent to the table-land above.

It was a glorious afternoon, such as one sometimes gets in the African spring, although it was so intensely still. Everywhere were the proofs and evidences of life. The winter was over, and now, from the sadness and sterility of its withered age, sprung young and lovely summer clad in sunshine, be-diamonded with dew, and fragrant with the breath of flowers. Jess lay back and looked up into the infinite depths above. How blue they were, and how measureless! She could not see the angry clouds that lay like visible omens on the horizon. See there, miles above

her, was one tiny circling speck. It was a vulture, watching her from his airy heights and descending a little to see if she was dead, or only sleeping.

Involuntarily she shuddered. The bird of death reminded her of Death himself also hanging high up there in the blue and waiting his opportunity to fall upon the sleeper. Then her eyes fell upon a bough of the glorious flowering bush under which she lay. It was not more than four feet above her head, but she was so still and motionless that a jewelled honeysucker came and hovered over the flowers, darting from one to another like a many-coloured flash. Thence her glance travelled to the great column of boulders that towered up above her, and that seemed to say, 'I am very old. I have seen many springs and many winters, and have looked down on many sleeping maids, and where are they now? All dead—all dead,' and an old baboon in the rocks with startling suddenness barked out '*all dead*' in answer.

Around her were the blooming lilies and the lustiness of springing life; the heavy air was sweet with the odour of ferns and the mimosa flower. The running water splashed and musically fell; the sunlight lay in golden bars athwart the shade, like the memory of happy days in the grey vista of a life; away in the cliffs yonder, the rock-doves were preparing to nest by hundreds, and waking the silence with their cooing and the flutter of their wings. Even the grim old eagle perched on the pinnacle of the rock was pruning himself, contentedly happy in the knowledge that his mate had laid an egg in that dark corner of the cliff. Everything rejoiced and cried aloud that summer was at hand and that it was time to bloom and love and nest. Soon it would be winter again, when things died, and next summer other things would live under the sun, and they perchance would be forgotten. That was what they seemed to say.

And as she lay and heard, her youthful blood, drawn by Nature's magnetic force, as the moon draws the tide, rose in her veins like the sap in the budding trees, and stirred her virginal serenity. All the bodily natural part of her caught the tones of Nature's happy voice that bade her break her bands, live and love, and be a woman. And lo! the spirit within her answered to it, and flung wide her bosom's doors, and of a sudden, as it were, something quickened and lived in her heart that was of her and yet had its own life—a life apart; something that sprung from her and another, and that would always be with her now and could never die; and she rose

pale and trembling, as a woman trembles at the first stirring of the child that she shall bear, and clung to the flowery bough of the beautiful bush above and then sank down again, feeling the spirit of her girlhood had departed from her, and that another angel had entered there; knew that she loved with heart and soul and body, and was a very woman.

She had called to Love as the wretched call to Death, and Love had come in his strength and possessed her utterly; and now for a little while she was afraid to pass into the shadow of his wings, as the wretched who call to Death fear him when they feel his icy fingers. But the fear passed, and the great joy and the new consciousness of power and of identity that the inspiration of a true passion gives to some strong deep natures remained, and after a while she prepared to make her way home across the mountain-top, feeling as though she were another woman. But still she did not go, but lay there with closed eyes and drank of this new intoxicating wine. So absorbed was she that she did not notice that the birds had ceased to call, and that the eagle had fled away for shelter. She was not aware of the great and solemn hush that had taken the place of the merry voice of beast and bird and preceded the breaking of the gathered storm.

At last as she rose to go she opened her dark eyes, which had been for the most part shut while this great change was passing over her, and with a natural impulse turned to look once more on the place where her happiness had found her, and then sank down again with a little exclamation. Where was the light and the glory and all the happiness of the life that moved and grew around her? Gone, and in its place darkness and rising mist and deep and ominous shadows. As she lay and thought, the sun had sunk behind the hill and left the great gulf nearly dark, and, as is common in South Africa, the heavy storm-cloud had crept across the blue sky and sealed up the light from above. A drear wind came moaning up the gorge from the plains beyond; the heavy rain-drops began to fall one by one; the lightning flickered fitfully in the belly of the advancing cloud. The storm that John had feared was upon her.

Then came a dreadful hush. Jess had recovered herself by now, and, knowing what to expect, snatched up her sketching-block and hurried into the shelter of a little cave hollowed by water in the side of the cliff. And then with a rush of ice-cold air the tempest burst. Down came the rain in a sheet; and then flash upon flash gleaming fiercely through the vapour-laden air;

and roar upon roar echoing in the rocky cavities in volumes of fearful sound. Then another pause and space of utter silence, followed by a blaze of light that dazed and blinded her, and suddenly one of the piled-up columns to her left swayed to and fro like a poplar in a breeze, and fell headlong with a crash that almost mastered the awful crackling of the thunder overhead and the shrieking of the baboons scared from their crannies in the cliff. Down it came beneath the stroke of the fiery sword, the brave old pillar that had lasted out so many centuries, sending clouds of dust and fragments high up into the blinding rain, and carrying awe and wonder into the heart of the girl who watched its fall. Away rolled the storm as quickly as it had come, with a sound like the passing of the artillery of an embattled host, and then a grey rain set in, blotting out the outlines of everything, like an enduring absorbing grief, dulling the edge and temper of a life. Through it Jess, scared and wet to the skin, managed to climb up the natural steps, now made almost impassable by the prevailing gloom and the rush of the water from the table-top of the mountain, and so on across the sodden plain, down the rocky path on the farther side, past the little walled-in cemetery with its four red gums planted at its corners, in which a stranger who had died at Mooifontein lay buried, and so, just as the darkness of the wet night came down like a cloud, home at last. At the backdoor stood her old uncle with a lantern.

‘Is that you, Jess?’ he called out in his stentorian tones. ‘Lord! what a sight!’ as she emerged, her sodden dress clinging to her slight form, her hands bleeding with clambering over the rocks, her curling hair which had broken loose hanging down her back and half covering her face.

‘Lord, what a sight!’ he ejaculated again. ‘Why, Jess, where have you been? Captain Niel has gone out to look for you with the Kafirs.’

‘I have been sketching in Leuw Kloof, and got caught in the storm. There, uncle, let me pass, I want to get these wet things off. It is a bitter night,’ and off she ran to her room, leaving a long trail of water behind her as she passed. The old man entered the house, shut the door, and blew out the lantern.

‘Now, what is it she reminds me of?’ he said aloud as he groped his way down the passage to the sitting-room. ‘Ah, I know, that night when she first came here out of the rain leading Bessie by the hand. What can the girl have been thinking of, not to see the thunder coming up? She ought to know the signs of the weather

here by now. Dreaming, I suppose, dreaming. She's an odd woman, Jess, very.' Perhaps he did not quite know how accurate his guess was, and how true the conclusion he drew from it. Certainly she had been dreaming, and she was an odd woman.

Meanwhile Jess was rapidly changing her clothes and removing the traces of her struggle with the elements. But of that other struggle that she had gone through she could not remove the traces. They and the love that arose from it would endure as long as she endured. It was her former self that had been cast off in it and that now lay behind her, an empty and meaningless thing like the shapeless pile of garments. It was all very strange. So he had gone to look for her, and had not found her. She was glad that he had gone. It made her happy to think of him searching and calling in the wet and the night. She was only a woman, and it was natural that she should feel thus. By-and-by he would come back and find her clothed and in her right mind and ready to greet him. She was glad that he had not seen her, wet, dishevelled, and shapeless. A woman looks so unpleasant like that. It might have turned him against her. Men like women to look nice and clean and pretty. That gave her an idea. She turned to her glass and, holding the light above her head, studied her own face attentively in it. She was a woman with as little vanity in her composition as it is possible for a woman to have, and she had not till now given her personal looks much consideration. They had not been of great importance to her in the Wakkerstoom district of the Transvaal. But now all of a sudden they became very important; and so she stood and looked at her own wonderful eyes, at the masses of curling brown hair still damp and shining from the rain, at the curious pallid face and the clear-cut determined mouth.

'If it was not for my eyes and hair, I should be very ugly,' she said to herself aloud. 'If only I were beautiful like Bessie, now.' The thought of her sister gave her another idea. What if he were to prefer Bessie? Now she thought of it, he had been very attentive to Bessie. A feeling of dreadful doubt and jealousy passed through her, for women like Jess know what jealousy is in its pain. Supposing that it was all in vain, supposing that what she had to-day given—given with both hands once and for all, so that she could not take it back, had been given to a man who loved another woman, and that woman her own dear sister? Supposing that the fate of her love was to be like water falling unalteringly on the hard rock that heeds it not and retains it not. True, the

water wears the rock away ; but could she be satisfied with that ? She could master him, she knew ; even if things were so, she could win him to herself, she had read it in his eyes that afternoon ; but could she, who had promised to her dead mother to cherish and protect her sister, whom till this afternoon she had loved better than anything in the world, and whom she still loved more dearly than her life—could she, if it should happen to be thus, rob that sister of her lover ? And if it should be so, what would her life be like ? It would be like the great pillar after the lightning had smitten it, a pile of scattered smoking fragments, a very heaped-up débris of a life. She could feel it even now. No wonder she sat there upon the little white bed holding her hand against her heart and feeling terribly afraid.

Just then she heard John's footstep in the hall.

'I can't find her,' he said in an anxious tone to some one as she rose, taking her candle with her, and left the room. The light from the candle fell full upon his face and dripping clothes. It was white and anxious, and she was glad to see the anxiety.

'Oh, thank God ! here you are !' he said, catching her hand. 'I began to think you were quite lost. I have been right down the Kloof after you, and got a nasty fall over it.'

'It is very good of you,' she said in a low voice, and again their eyes met, and again the glance thrilled him. There was such a wonderful light in Jess's eyes that night.

Half an hour afterwards they sat down as usual to supper. Bessie did not put in an appearance till it was a quarter over, and then sat very silent through it. Jess narrated her adventure in the Kloof, and everybody listened, but nobody said much. There was a sort of shadow over the house that evening, or perhaps it was that each of the party was thinking of his own affairs. After supper old Silas Croft began talking about the political state of the country, which gave him uneasiness. He said that he believed the Boers really meant to rebel against the Government this time. Frank Muller had told him so, and he always knew what was going on. This announcement did not tend to raise anybody's spirits, and the evening passed as silently as the meal had done. At last Bessie got up, stretched her rounded arms, and said that she was tired and going to bed.

'Come into my room,' she whispered to her sister as she passed. 'I want to speak to you.'

(To be continued.)

CAS'ALTY CORNER.

As the present writer does not profess to have an exhaustive acquaintance with the eccentricities of street nomenclature, he cannot say that there is not somewhere within the Metropolitan area a spot officially named Cas'alty Corner. There may be, though the probability is that there is not. For the name is proverbial and typical, not literal or local. It typifies an institution rather than any given place. A Cas'alty Corner is a feature of every district of outcast London, is to be found wherever the poor of the great city most do congregate. It is a corner-man's corner, but the men 'using' it are really what the loafer and rough classes of corner-men only pretend to be—namely, working-men out of employment. They are men who have worked, who in an in-and-out way do work, and who, though they cannot say with literal truthfulness that

From early morn till dewy eve they tramp in search of work,

still do look for employment, hoping to find it, and willing to take it whenever and wherever it may be offered to them. They are for the most part cas'alty labourers, men who in good times only pick up work by the day or hour, and live from hand to mouth. How they manage to live at all in bad times is a mystery known to few save themselves. They are poorly clad, and do not present an over-cleanly appearance, for as a rule they only possess the clothes they 'stand up in,' and those 'customary suits' are heavy with the soil and grime of labour. Though they try to 'put a good face on it' before each other and the world, their characteristic expression of countenance is rather rueful than cheerful. Altogether the aspect of Cas'alty Corner is decidedly Dantesque; but the gloominess of the picture is to a great extent upon the surface only. These corner-men are the poor and unemployed, but they are not *les misérables*. The latter class do not corner, do not assemble together in any considerable numbers. There is fellowship among them no doubt, but they shrink from the general observation which cornering involves. Notwithstanding the sombre tone of Cas'alty Corner from a picturesque point of view, 'All hope abandon ye who enter here' would be a very inappropriate inscription to place over it. Fortunately for himself,

the cas'alty labourer is one of the most hopeful of human beings. He is quite a Micawber in being in a state of blessed expectation of something turning up, but it is due to him to say that he is not content with merely waiting for the something to come to him; he looks for it.

The particular Cas'alty Corner which it is here proposed to take by way of general illustration is a thoroughly representative one. It is situated in a distinctively working-class neighbourhood, and 'lies handy' to the docks, a number of river-side and canal bank wharves, firewood yards, chemical and white-lead factories, and engineering workshops. It is a corner formed by the junction of a busy main road with the still more busy high street of a poor and populous district. Forming its background on both its main road and high street facings is a 'commanding corner public-house,' which stands out a conspicuous landmark, not merely by reason of its size, which dwarfs surrounding buildings, but also—and even more so—by reason of its brassy, glassy, gasy, gin-palacey style of exterior decoration. The pathways in front of this establishment are of such ample width that the *habitués* of the corner can fringe themselves along the curb without causing any obstruction, and the spot has the further advantage that along the edge of the pavement are placed a number of short iron pillars, which serve admirably as leaning-posts. A somewhat special feature of this corner—a feature that brings to it a class of frequenters not to be seen at every Cas'alty Corner—consists in the circumstance that just beyond the main-road end of the public-house is an advertising station, on which is placed each morning the sheets of a certain daily paper that is regarded as one of the 'best mediums' for the insertion of advertisements of situations vacant. This has the effect of drawing to the corner numbers of unemployed clerks and shopmen and others, who even in poverty have an 'appearance to keep up.' They have literally to consider their cloth. They are in the bonds of gentility, the victims—no doubt in the majority of instances the willing victims—of conventional usage. They cannot don the cheap but comfortable cord or moleskin which is the wear of the labouring classes. If they would keep their caste, and retain any chance of obtaining employment, they must dress in cloth, be it ever so shabbily. These are more to be pitied than almost any other class of the unemployed, and those of them who are brought down to resort to Cas'alty Corner are

the most to be pitied of their class. All hopes of their securing employment through private friendship or influence have been exhausted, and they have come to be so poor that if they have a penny at all it is of such material importance to them that they cannot afford to part with it to pay for admission to a reading-room. Therefore they come to consult the advertisements gratuitously displayed at our Cas'alty Corner. They come early, while as yet but few of the more ordinary corner-men are about. As they gather around the board, a stump of pencil and scrap of paper, or much-worn pocket-book, in hand, you can see that the brand of genteel poverty is upon them. Their clothing exhibits every variety of sign and token of attempts at sartorial restoration and renovation, and though this is creditable to the wearers, it rather accentuates than disguises their general shabbiness of attire. Their hats are greasy and limp, some of them, as we once heard a labouring *habitué* of the corner point out, being noticeably soft and dented at the part of the brim which is taken hold of when the hat is raised to a lady; from which circumstance the labourer deduced that the wearers of these now shocking bad hats had in their day been 'toffs.' Most of the little crowd are down at heel, and some of them even out at elbow, while their garments generally are shiney, or threadbare, or frayed. As a rule, they are most presentable in the matter of collar and cuff. Any of them who have managed to keep a fairly good-looking overcoat can of course cover a multitude of shortcomings; but it usually happens that those who have kept overcoats at all have only been able to do so because the coats have *not* been good ones—have been so seedy as not to be pawnable. The faces of some of these poor but genteel members of the army of the unemployed are unmistakably hunger-pinched, and all of them have an anxious careworn look. This latter remark applies in an especial degree to the more elderly men—happily a minority—men who have probably given hostages to fortune, and who are weighed down by the knowledge that their wives and children as well as themselves are suffering from want.

In England in the present day the lot of the unemployed 'mere clerk' is about as hard as the lot of civilised man can be. His calling is chronically and largely overstocked, and the overstocking increases, and appears likely to continue to increase. As artisans sometimes figuratively remark, with a sort of contemptuous pity, mere clerks are to be had at stale mackerel price—thirteen

for a shilling. The clerk out of situation has no handicraft to fall back upon; he cannot dig, and to beg he is ashamed, while emigration agents simply inform him that he is not the sort of man required in the colonies. Occasionally a woman is to be seen mingling with the forlorn hope gathered around the advertisement-board, and it is gratifying to see with what ready courtesy way is made for her alike by those who are consulting the paper and any of the regular corner-men through whose midst she may have to pass to reach the hoarding. After they have got through their reading, the poor but genteel section do not corner to any considerable extent. Some, who hope that they have found something in which there is a chance for them, hasten away at once, mostly on foot, but in some instances indulging in the luxury of a tramcar ride. A few who have made no notes—who have not seen anything that will suit them or that they think they will suit—disconsolately take their stand at the corner for a while, probably because they have not for the moment made up their minds as to what to be at next. In reply to the friendly 'What luck?' of any of the labouring unemployed who may have been watching their proceedings, they will answer no luck but bad luck, and enter into conversation upon the theme of the hardness of the times. Presently, however, they move away 'by one, by two, by three,' the solitary individuals going home, the others generally starting on a shop-window-gazing stroll just to fill up time for an hour or two. A few, on leaving the advertising-station, may be seen entering an adjoining stationer's shop, to obtain the stamp and writing material necessary for answering advertisements that are to be replied to by letter only. If you get into conversation with some of these, they will tell you that they have literally spent pounds in postage answering such advertisements, and all in vain. They will describe to you the crowds of competitors they have found themselves struggling with when trying for situations that were to be sought by personal application. They will speak of the most disastrous chances by which they have 'just missed' good berths, of their having lacked some one small qualification that had not been required from them in their previous situations, or having noticed an advertisement or seen an employer too late, or the like. Sadder still than these are their stories of situations missed after negotiations, and inquiries, and delays—stories of hope deferred that are calculated to make sick the heart of one who has only to listen to them.

By ten o'clock in the morning, the poor but genteel contingent have disappeared from Cas'alty Corner, and the gathering of the clans of the labouring unemployed is nearing high-water mark. By that time most of them have shot their bolt for the day, so far as searching for work is concerned. During 'putting on' hours, which are from six to nine, they will have been their round of docks, wharves, or workshops, and will have received 'no for an answer' to the, to them, momentous question—which has come to be regarded as their Shibboleth—'Any chance to-day?' Such being the case, they are not merely as well at the corner as anywhere else—they are better. Cas'alty Corner is known as a sort of unofficial labour exchange. If a stevedore, or a factory or wharf foreman, suddenly finds himself in want of labourers he knows that he can 'have his pick' at the corner, and resorts there. In the same way, if any local tradesman unexpectedly finds himself in need of able-bodied assistance, he goes to the corner for it. Workmen in employment, if they hear—as they frequently do—of 'chances' for the unemployed, will go to the corner to give 'the tip' to friends or former mates, and even the corner-men themselves can advantageously exchange notes. In any case the men are company to each other, and this, and the life and bustle of the thoroughfares commanded by the corner, helps to keep from brooding over-much those corner-men who may be inclined to brood. Though, taken through and through, the Cas'alty Corner men are a very mixed lot, the bulk of them are cas'alty labourers—men who never have regular employment. They are engaged and paid by the hour, and often enough are put on only for an hour, while even if taken on for a 'spell' of a week, or as a long run a month, they are engaged from day to day and paid up each evening. These are the men who chiefly give character to a Cas'alty Corner. They are about as much out of work as in, and consequently acquire a good deal of the loafer manner; but, as a matter of fact, they are not the no-visible-means-of-support loafers that to outsiders they doubtless appear to be. A little study of them would make that clear even to the uninitiated. While cornering, they generally carry their hands in their pockets, but when they withdraw them—which is generally to handle their pipes—it is evident at a glance that they are hard and knotted; they are toil-hardened, and occasionally shorn of their fair proportions of fingers in a manner that the hands of the thoroughpaced loafer are not. There is nothing in their bearing to suggest a suspicion of mas-

querading. Their clothes are unquestionably 'working' clothes, and are worn by them with an unconscious ease that tells of men to the manner born to 'live in' such garments.

These men are disposed to believe—and they act up to their belief—in a theory to the effect that dirt helps to keep you warm, and that washing takes more than wearing out of clothing. As a result, the grease, and grime, and labour stain upon their clothes, is often unpleasantly and unnecessarily pronounced, but it is undoubtedly genuine. If you approach near enough to hear the conversation of the men—and you need not go very near, for their talk is always loud-toned—you will discover that a good deal of it relates to work. Naturally this phase of their discourse turns principally upon the scarcity of employment, the difficulty of obtaining it, their personal vicissitudes in seeking it, and the hopes and prospects of their further search in the immediate future. They speak of what ships are expected or are over-due, at what docks, which wharves or warehouses are likely to be receiving goods, and what firms in the building and iron and other trades are rumoured to be tendering for work. Foremen and gangers are named who are 'good to give a start' to the speakers at the first opportunity; and in the same way there is mention made of more fortunate fellow-workmen who are 'on the look-out' to serve them. Of course there is a considerable amount of discussion of rates of pay, and a still more considerable amount of objurgation of foreign competition. A listener, competent to judge upon the point, would be convinced that all this talk is technically correct, and up to date; which the talk of the loafer and out-of-luck thief class of corner-men, trying to pose as working men, would not be, supposing they cared to elaborate their assumption of character to the extent of trying to talk shop. Moreover, the talk of the Cas'alty Corner-men has not—as yet at any rate—any taint of the revolutionary jargon, which of late has come to be added to the brutal ribaldry, hideous slang, and blood-curdling blasphemy, which, formerly, were the exclusive characteristics of the public utterances of the rowdy and criminal type of corner-men. To those who have the best opportunities of studying the habits and customs of the last-named type, it is evident that in these latter days they have been 'got at' by the most pernicious of the professional agitators. That, directly, there is nothing to be got out of such corner-men is certain. What the motives of the agitators in seeking to wire-pull them may be is not a matter to be dis-

cussed here. We merely mention the fact, as one serving to help to discriminate between working class corner-men and corner-men of the dangerous classes.

As already stated, the majority of the Cas'alty Corner-men are cas'alty labourers; but mingling with them are a number of 'stone-broke' costers, fish hawkers, and gutter merchants. Either from their fault or their misfortune these men are for the present without 'stock-money,' and are now on the look-out for any employment by which they may put a few shillings together wherewith to make a fresh start in trade. In the crowd, though disposed to regard themselves as being less distinctively of it than the others, are a sprinkling of unemployed artisans, bricklayers, carpenters, engineers and other skilled iron-workers, shipwrights, tailors, and cobblers. These, though for the time being out of work, cannot, strictly speaking, be classed as cas'alty men. When in employment they are not picked up by the hour. They are regularly 'shopped,' and while shopped are counted upon the staff of the establishment in which they are engaged. Even when they are to be seen swelling the numbers at Cas'alty Corner, they may not be out of work in the full sense of the term; they may be merely 'standing off' for a time; those in the building trades through stress of weather; and those in the iron trades because firms are waiting for material or the completion of stages of work preceding those to be performed by the particular classes of mechanics who have to stand off. The artisans are easily identified by their dress and the various 'trade marks' upon it; the bricklayers by mortar splashes; the engineer by grease, and the boilermaker by iron-mould spots; the carpenter by his rule-pocket; the shipwright by his blue jacket; and the cobbler by a general waxiness of appearance. The tailor is somewhat of an exception in this respect. If he comes out in the slippers which he wears upon the workboard he is, of course, unmistakable; but, usually, he is only distinguishable by an uncommon length and raggedness of hair, and a marked shabbiness of attire. As a rule, the cobblers of Cas'alty Corner belong to the 'translating,' the tailors to the 'slop' trade. When in work they can scarcely earn labourer's wages, and when out of work are among the most forlorn and depressed-looking members of the unemployed. They rank with the poorest of Cas'alty Corner men; but the other descriptions of artisans are—of course in the present connection the term is a very comparative one—the rich of the crowd. As when in employment they earn good pay, they have better opportunities

than the others to provide for the proverbial rainy day, and their rainy days are much fewer and farther between than are those of the labourers. If they are members of Trades' Unions they will, when out of work, be 'on donation,' and one way or another they generally manage to have a little money in their pockets; and on the principle that in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king, they are, among their unpennied companions at the corner, men of many friends. Their store of coin is small; still they have 'a penny they can spend, and a penny they can lend,' and a penny is literally the gift that—under the colourable pretence of a loan—they most frequently make to 'cleaned out' labourers who have the claim of acquaintanceship upon them. That sum represents the 'price of 'arf a pint of four ale,' a recognised 'standard of value' at Cas'alty Corner. If need be, however, the artisan will 'spring a point,' will 'run to' the three half-pence necessary for the purchase of 'an 'arf hounce of tobacco.' However hard up they may be, the corner-men will contrive somehow to have a bit of 'bacca, for, if driven to so evil an alternative, they would rather go without food than without smoke. They lounge at the corner, forty smoking like one, and the air is heavy with the reek from their pipes. The brand of tobacco they consume is certainly the reverse of choice. Its rank odour, combined with a sight of the foul nicotine-blackened clays from which it is blown, is enough to make an ordinary smoker feel faint.

Though the assertion has something of a paradoxical ring, it is a fact that the 'commanding corner public-house' which forms the background of Cas'alty Corner benefits materially by the presence of the corner-men. Those men are emphatically droughty souls. To judge by their practice in relation to the 'liquor question,' they have a perpetual thirst upon them, and one of their first objects in life is to get the said thirst 'quenched.' If they have not themselves money to spend in drink, they are the cause of spending in others. It is 'a custom of the country' to treat unemployed working men—to 'stand' drink for them. It may be that it is a custom that would be more honoured in the breach than the observance, but meantime it holds sway, and here we are dealing not with the desirable but the actual. There is always a stream of foot-passengers flowing past the corner, and the cas'alty men are ever on the look-out for 'Christians' among them—for present neighbours or former mates who will take them into the 'pub,' and drink with them; or for good-natured employers, or tradesmen to whom they are known, or even easy-going strangers, who,

though they may not care to enter the public-house themselves, will yet stand the price of a pot. Occasionally they will draw a big prize in the lottery—will fall in with some 'broke loose' personage who is 'throwing his money about.' They avail themselves of such a stroke of fortune with a promptitude and energy worthy of a better cause. 'Four ale' is abandoned for more generous liquor, and the treating being in such cases *ad libitum*, they are apt to drink not wisely but too much. Generally speaking, however, they only come in for a few half-pints each of the cheaper drink; and 'four ale' being anything but a potent draught, a reasonable quantity does but little harm to a labouring man—does little more, indeed, than literally 'squench' his thirst. All day long individual members or little groups of the corner-men may be seen dropping in or popping out of the public-house. Upon the part of men out of employment, and whose families are probably but scantily provided with food, this looks bad, but, as will be understood from what has been said above, their proceedings in this matter have less of ill-doing about them than what meets the eye would naturally suggest to an outsider. Whatever may be their consumption of drink, they spend very little upon it, and no doubt numbers of them would be only too glad to receive 'friendship's-offering' in bread instead of beer did the unwritten law of treatment governing the case permit of their doing so, which it does not.

Cas'alty Corner is a sufficiently lively spot in itself, and those frequenting it try to assume a never-say-die look and bearing. There is chat and laughter, and it may be even a little horseplay, going on amongst them; nevertheless they find their cornering dreary work. Though they are to a greater or lesser extent 'used to' their troubles, and in any case bear them Spartan fashion, the troubles will make themselves felt and tell their tale upon the countenance. With the Cas'alty Corner men the loud laugh may speak, not the vacant, but the tortured mind. It is not unfrequently intended to conceal

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears—

thoughts of wives and little ones enduring the pinch of poverty (in the dire forms in which the unemployed understand it) at home—thoughts that may well account for the haggard expression which, despite their hopefulness of disposition, often marks the features of out-of-work labourers. They are wishful to be diverted from such thoughts, and therefore little serves to divert them. To relieve the monotony of their cornering, little knots of them will

from time to time take a turn along the High Street and get what amusement or excitement they can out of witnessing the chaffering going on at the cheap greengrocers', fishmongers', or provision-dealers' shops. Such a group will often pass a good half-hour at the windows of a newsagent's establishment, studying the contents-bills of the daily papers and the illustrations in the pictorial journals, and more especially those of the 'Illustrated Police News,' of which delectable publication numbers of the Cas'alty Corner men class are, when in work, patrons, and at all times admirers. A horse down, or a horse bolted, are incidents that have a certain amount of attraction for labouring corner-men, though it is only fair to them to say that they are always ready to lend a hand to raise the one or capture the other. Street fights are a greater attraction still, though the greatest 'draw' for them is the sight of other men at work. If they can only come across a gang of men 'taking up' the street, or 'putting down' telegraph wires, or making gas connections, or anything of that kind, they seem happy. They will hang over them for hours at a stretch, with an air of complacent self-satisfaction that seems to say that for once in a way they are really experiencing the luxury of leisure.

Cas'alty Corner is a good trade barometer. When it is thronged trade is bad, and when trade is good the gatherings at the corner are correspondingly small. At best the Cas'alty Corner men are a rough lot, but they are quite distinct from the dangerous classes. They are, as a body, law-abiding citizens, even though individual members of them may not be all else that a model citizen should be and that a model labourer is expected to be. When things go hardly with them they are disposed to look upon themselves as being in a sense society's martyrs, and not altogether without some show of reason. They are part of the surplus labour which it is argued England *must* keep on hand to meet the requirements of 'flush' periods of trade. Then they 'supply a want,' and enable the country to rise to the situation. But when periods of trade depression set in, the country, so far as they can see, cares but little for them. They become the 'unemployed' again, and in a general way are left to shift for themselves as best they can. Strive and endure as they will, it is but a poor shift they can make, a shift that involves bitter hardships, mental as well as physical. These hardships they bear with a patience and fortitude that would be regarded as worthy of public praise and recognition were they shown under more striking circumstances.

THE WINGHAM CASE.

I SUPPOSE that if I have wished once I must have wished full a hundred times to set down on paper some account of the strange affair which took up the best part of my thoughts for so long after my late master's decease. But I have been kept back from it partly by not being sure whether it would be agreeable to the family, and partly because—although I may call myself without vanity a man of education—I did not feel that perfect confidence in my spelling and composition which, perhaps, I ought to have felt. Now, however, the gentleman chiefly concerned in the matter has been kind enough to say that he will look over what I have written when it is finished, and correct any faults that he may find. Also, he says, what is no doubt true, that I can tell the story far better than anyone else could; and finally, he means to alter all the names, which I am sorry for, though ready to admit that he may be right in this.

And so, not to waste time and space, I will begin at once with the beginning—that is to say, with the day on which my lamented master, Mr. Frederick Wingham, of Abbot's Wingham, in the county of Hants, was laid in his grave. A troubled man was I that same afternoon, and this not on account of the loss which we had all sustained; for I only used the word lamented just now because it is respectful and usual so to do, and not because anybody (unless it might be Miss Phyllis, who is far too good for such a world as ours) could possibly have lamented Mr. Frederick Wingham. Indeed, if ever there lived a man wholly given up to wickedness of all kinds, and cursed with the devil's own temper into the bargain, beyond all doubt it was the gentleman above mentioned.

I never meant to have said that, and for the last five minutes I have been asking myself whether it would not be more becoming in me to scratch the words out. But since they are written, let them stand. I must have told the truth about him sooner or later, and in almost all cases the sooner the truth is told the better. Only I do trust that no one will so misjudge me as to think that a paltry legacy of fifty pounds, when five hundred or a thousand was what I was fairly entitled to look for, would cause

me to speak ill of the dead. That would not be at all like me, nor did I resent more than was unavoidable the very mean and ungrateful language in which this poor trifle was conveyed to me. 'I give and bequeath' (this was what the lawyer read out, with an unpleasant smile upon his face) 'to my body-servant Joseph Curtis the sum of fifty pounds, as a small addition to the fortune which he must have amassed by robbing me systematically for upwards of five-and-twenty years.' Now, to have such things said of me after I had rewarded constant insult and ill-usage by a quarter of a century's devoted service, and to have them said, too, by one who had taken good care to place three solid coffins and all the masonry of the family vault between him and sound of contradiction, was surely enough to make me tell myself bitterly that this world was no place for an honest man to live and thrive in. Nevertheless, I was sustained by a good conscience and by the thought that I had saved enough to keep me independent of service in my old age; and Ellen, Miss Phyllis's maid, with whom I hoped soon to set up house, had assured me that she paid no heed to calumny in connection with my name. So I may truly say that what troubled me, as I sat alone in my little room overlooking the rose-garden, was not my own disappointment and just indignation, but the far more important portion of the will which we had just heard read. Knowing what our late master was, and how he delighted in malice of the most unexpected kind, I think all of us who were in the room drew a breath of relief when we heard that the residue of the property, real and personal (that is to say, everything with the exception of a few small legacies), was left to 'my niece and adopted daughter, Phyllis Mortimer.' And I am sure there was not one of us but longed to punch that vile lawyer's head for pausing before he read out the next words—'Unless or until she marry,' in which event the entire estate was to pass to 'my nearest male relative.'

But if all of us servants were grieved to the heart as soon as this spiteful and unnatural condition became clear to us, there was somebody else present who rubbed his hands under the table and had to conceal his glee as best he could under a violent fit of coughing. And who should this be but Mr. Anthony Wingham of Upton, younger brother of the deceased and beneath him in intellect, though I really do believe his superior in point of sinfulness. For this Anthony, whose means were small and his family large, to find nothing between him and twenty thousand a year

but the chance of a beautiful young lady remaining unmarried all her days, was indeed such luck as he never could have anticipated, and no wonder it almost choked him. As for Miss Phyllis keeping hold of the property, I had sad grounds for fear that there was little likelihood of that, and already I could fancy I saw those Anthony Wingham's trapezing upstairs and downstairs, turning everything topsy-turvy, and exulting in the possession of what in common justice should have been their cousin's, and not theirs.

That any man or woman with ever so small a human heart should know our Miss Phyllis and not love her was, I truly think, an impossibility. Of course her great beauty, and those dark-blue eyes of hers, and her bronze-coloured hair, with a ripple in it, and most of all her smile, which lighted up our gloomy old house like a burst of sunshine on a wet day—of course all these might count for something in disposing people to take to her at first sight; but we who lived with her felt that, great as such gifts would have been in the ordinary run of ladies, they were trifling in her, being so far outdone by the goodness and sweetness of her nature. Never, from the day when she first came to us as a child of five years old to this present time of writing, have I heard a harsh word from her, nor do I believe that it was in her to think a harsh thought—though how she managed to abstain from that at times is clean beyond the understanding of a poor sinner like myself. Even my old master loved her, I suppose, after a fashion. At any rate, she could say things to him which no one else could say, and I am sure that she was the only living creature that was not mortally afraid of him. I have heard it said that, many years ago, he had been fond of her mother, his only sister, who thought fit to marry a poor man, and died soon afterwards. My master never took any notice of Mr. Mortimer; but, perhaps, when this gentleman died too, something as near pity as he was capable of may have touched him, for—to the great astonishment of everybody in the house—he suddenly declared his intention of adopting the orphan girl. He was getting to be an oldish man at this time, and he and I, after wandering over the face of the world and carrying on in various ways which I see no use in doing more than just alluding to, had settled down at Abbot's Wingham for good—or, to speak more correctly, for a permanency. At first he only tolerated the child, though we servants made a pet of her at once; but by degrees, I think, he became really attached to her; and small credit he deserves for what nobody could have

helped. I should be afraid to say how many governesses she had. Some couldn't stand Mr. Wingham's temper, some couldn't stand his morals, and some he couldn't stand; so that I don't suppose there was a single one of them who remained in the house more than six months. But in spite of all this chopping and changing in her education, Miss Phyllis grew up to be the most charming young lady in Hampshire, not to say the most charming young lady in the whole world.

Now, it seemed to many people a strange thing that the two Mr. Winghams, who were known to have as little softness or kindness about them as any two men could well have, should each have adopted an orphan; and I myself was puzzled by it, until I found out that Mr. Godfrey had inherited about six hundred a year from his father, of which, no doubt, old Anthony managed to keep at least two-thirds in his own pocket. This young Godfrey was son of the third brother, the Reverend Godfrey Wingham, who died suddenly of yellow fever in the West Indies, and whose only child, then a baby, was sent home to Upton to be taken care of, my master being abroad and Abbot's Wingham shut up at the time. Mr. Godfrey was a fine young fellow, quite unlike the rest of his family, barring his dark complexion and handsome face. He used to come over to see us every now and then from Upton, which is on the other side of the county, and as he grew older his visits became more frequent. Anybody might have guessed that it was not for the pleasure of seeing his uncle's hard face, and hearing his uncle's bitter tongue, that he took those long rides; but somehow or other my master never did guess it until it was too late. When he did, there was a fine fuss, and Mr. Godfrey was forbidden to show his face within a mile of the house again. What the old man said to Miss Phyllis I don't know; only I know that he made her cry, for which I should have liked to give him the thrashing that he had so long deserved, but had never received, being possessed of great muscular power. What he could not make her do was to break her word; and Ellen informed me that her young lady meant to be true to Mr. Godfrey, though they were not allowed to write to one another, and though he had been sent away to join his regiment somewhere in the North of England. For my part, I confess I thought she might have made a better match; but, of course, if she was so set upon it, it could not be helped, and I had reasons for thinking that she would not have many years to wait before she was her own mistress. Whether it

was to keep her from this particular marriage, or whether it was by reason of the hatred which he had, and often expressed, of marriage in general, that my master had made that grievous will, who could tell? In a man of such curious crookedness and malevolence, it was vain to seek for motives; all that was plain to me was that the marriage would now take place, and that there would be no sort of opposition to it on the part of the 'nearest male relative.'

I was sitting, as I have said, in my room, with these depressing thoughts for company, when one of the footmen came to say that I was wanted in the library immediately. There I found Mr. Short, the lawyer, seated behind the writing-table, and beside him Mr. Anthony Wingham, who had thrown his long, gaunt body into an arm-chair. As I came in it struck me that Mr. Anthony gave me an odd, quick look, and this I noticed because, as a general thing, he disliked looking at anybody. However, I did not return his glance, not wishing to commit myself in the smallest degree until I had heard what was coming.

'Now, Joseph Curtis,' began the lawyer, in a bullying sort of tone which I did not like, 'we have one or two questions to put to you; and if you will take my advice you will answer them truly.'

'I should have made so bold as to do that without your advice, sir,' said I.

'Oh, you would, would you? Very glad to hear it, I'm sure. Well, Curtis, I believe you are acquainted with most of the circumstances of your late master's life.'

'My master had great confidence in me, sir.'

'So it would appear. Supposing, for instance, that your master had been secretly married in early life, that would be a circumstance which you would be likely to know of, eh?'

'That I can't say, sir.'

'That you can't say! But, as a matter of fact, did such an event take place?'

'Sir,' answered I, stroking my chin reflectively, 'there are full as many as a score of ladies to whom my master may have been secretly married; but as I have never known him enter a church for the last twenty years, with or without them, I doubt whether any of them has a right to bear his name.'

At this Mr. Anthony broke out into a short laugh; but the lawyer gave himself a twist in his chair and shook his head at me like a dog worrying a bone.

'Curtis,' said he, 'you are prevaricating, and prevarication won't do with me. I don't mind telling you that we have pretty strong proof of this marriage; the question is whether there was any male issue of it, and if you could put us in the way of answering that question, I don't know that it might not be made a good thing for your pocket.'

'I am truly sorry, sir,' I replied, 'that I cannot give you the information you require.'

And truly sorry I was, without any doubt, for I need not say what a pure joy it would have been to me to see Mr. Anthony cut out of the succession. The lawyer went on cross-examining me for a quarter of an hour, doing his best to get me to contradict myself, and uttering many low insinuations against my character; but I kept my temper, not caring to lose it with such a fellow, and at last he had to give up, declaring roughly that he could 'make nothing of me.'

'How can you, when there is nothing to be discovered?' asked Mr. Anthony, looking, as was only natural, much relieved. 'I told you you had found a mare's nest. You can go now, Curtis.'

I withdrew respectfully, feeling a little hurt at the vulgar rudeness of that six-and-eightpenny man, but at the same time pleased that I had been able to baffle him. And I am afraid Mr. Short did not get as much champagne as he would have liked that evening; for, the house being full of people who had come for the funeral and were to stay the night, I kindly offered to help Richards the butler with waiting at dinner, and through absence of mind I must have forgotten to fill the lawyer's glass when it became empty. At all events, I could not afterwards recall having helped him more than once, and I was quite sorry to see him glaring savagely at me at dessert, when it was too late to make amends. However, I dare say he was better without it; for really good champagne, such as ours was, is a drink only fit for gentlemen.

Short's behaviour had proved him to be no gentleman, and moreover had prevented him from getting all the information out of me that he might have got. There is no surer way of putting an honest man's back up and setting him on his guard against making admissions than to treat him as though he were a rogue. And so, when Short began upon me in the way I have described, I felt it only right to meet him with not so much what you could call a fib as a gentle easing down of the truth. If he had taken up a more becoming tone he should have had the whole truth,

which was that Mr. Frederick Wingham had been privately married, shortly after I entered his service, to Miss Lucy Marden, of the Theatre Royal, Piccadilly. And this intelligence might have been obtained from me by a mere civil question and without any hint of pecuniary reward, for the excellent reason that I believed it to be of no value whatsoever. Poor Miss Marden—a very good and respectable girl, so far as my knowledge of her went—did not enjoy the honour of being Mrs. Wingham for long. Why my master married her I have no notion ; all I can say is that marry her he did—and in my presence, too—and that he began to repent of it without a moment's loss of time. Of course he treated her badly ; and she, having a high spirit, resented it. They lived together—or, at least, she lived in the lodgings which he had engaged for her—about four months, after which they parted and never met again. That was all that I knew about the matter, and my strong conviction was that there was nothing more to know. Yet of course there *might* be more. A baby might have been born after the separation, and the baby might have been a boy. Only I had always considered this most unlikely, because, as anybody who knows anything at all of the world must see, Mrs. Wingham, if she had had a child, would never have remained for such a number of years without bothering my master in some way. It was my belief that poor Mrs. Wingham was at rest in her grave ; and so, in fact, she was ; for I afterwards found out that Short had only heard of the marriage through discovering, among my late master's papers, a letter from the Reverend Godfrey, dated four-and-twenty years back, in which he was briefly informed that his wife was dead and was exhorted to repentance and a better life.

I turned the whole affair over in my mind very carefully during the evening, and the more I thought of it the more I became convinced that Mr. Anthony knew something—more, perhaps, than Short. Finally, I concluded to keep what knowledge I possessed to myself for the present, thinking that this could do no one any harm and might in the end prove beneficial to the interests of the family, which were what I had most at heart. I shall neither stop nor stoop to refute an absurd charge which was afterwards trumped up against me ; namely, that I only held my tongue in order to secure the chance of a handsome reward by ferreting out the heir without help from the lawyers and producing him at the right moment. Indeed, my subsequent conduct fully disposes of an accusation which never ought to have been made.

The night being fine and warm, I sat for a long time beside my open window, debating what my future course of action should be, and I had just heard the stable clock strike half-past ten when I was startled by the sound of one of the side-doors beneath me softly opening and shutting. I craned out over the window-ledge to see who was leaving the house at that unusual hour, and directly below me I descried a dark female figure. At first I thought I had caught one of the maids stealing out to keep tryst with her sweetheart—in which case I should have said nothing about it, for I never interfere with what does not concern me—but the moment that the figure began to move and flitted swiftly across the rose-garden towards the shrubbery, I perceived that it was no housemaid, but Miss Phyllis herself. Hardly had I had time to ask myself where in the world she could be going when the door opened and shut again, and another figure—the long, lean one of Mr. Anthony—glided out noiselessly and followed in her wake. Evidently the old rascal had been watching her, and was now determined to brave rheumatism in order to spy upon her proceedings. Now, that was a thing which my late master would never have done, and it shows the difference between the two men. My master was fond of boasting that he had no principles, and I dare say he had as few as most people; but for all that, it was not his nature to be shabby. He would shoot you as soon as look at you if you stood in his path; but he would never stab you in the back. Had he been a poor man, instead of a rich one, he would very likely have robbed you, only he would have made you count your money out to him, not picked your pocket. Anthony, on the other hand, though quite as unscrupulous, was more cunning, and liked to gain his ends by nasty, sneaking means. What he was up to now I could not guess; but it was clearly proper that I should go out after him and discover.

Thus it came about that I was forced to overhear a conversation which nothing except the duty of spying upon the spy would have induced me to listen to for one instant. I crept along under cover of the high laurel hedge, with the shadow of that disgraceful Anthony some yards ahead of me, until we came near to an open grassy space where there is an old sun-dial; and there I saw very much what I had expected to see after the first moment of surprise—that is to say, young Mr. Godfrey with his arm round Miss Phyllis's waist.

‘Oh, Godfrey,’ I heard her murmur, ‘this is very wrong!’

Very wrong it was, no doubt, and most indignant I felt with him for having entrapped her innocence into such a false position ; but of course he had plenty of excuses to make for himself. He had been dying for a word from her ; he could not decently enter the house which its late owner had closed against him ; his regiment had been ordered off to Ireland, so that there was no saying when they might meet again—and so forth, and so forth.

She seemed willing enough to forgive him, and said—— But I declare it goes against me to write down all that she said and how he answered her. A man of any delicacy who has been an unwilling eavesdropper must feel that the words which have reached his ears under such circumstances ought to go no further ; very likely, too, if I were to repeat at full length the first part of what I heard, the readers of this history would wish it over as heartily as I did at the time ; for it is no joke for a man of my age to have to remain crouched down under a damp hedge while two foolish young persons go through half an hour of billing and cooing.

I don't think I exaggerate when I say that it was a full half-hour before they broached the subject which anyone ignorant of the ways of lovers would have expected them to start with. Miss Phyllis—God bless her!—took her uncle's cruel disposal of her life just as she was sure to take it ; and though I deplored her imprudence, I could not help admiring the light way in which she talked of giving up twenty thousand a year. 'We shall be poor, instead of rich, that is all,' she said. 'You won't mind that, will you, Godfrey?'

But it seemed as if Mr. Godfrey did mind. He had taken his arm from her waist when she began to speak about the will, and now he was stalking up and down the grass-plot, his hands in his pockets and his head sunk upon his breast. It was some minutes before he answered her.

'This is worse than I thought it would be—much worse !' he exclaimed at length. 'If the property had been left to you unconditionally it would have been bad enough, because of course everybody would have said that I was marrying you for your money. Still, I should at least have done you no injury in that case. But to rob you of everything—to drag you down to the sort of life that a soldier's wife upon six hundred a year and her husband's pay leads !'——

'I should be quite satisfied with six or seven hundred a year,

Godfrey,' says poor Miss Phyllis, with a little quaver in her voice.

'Ah, my dear! you don't know. You have been accustomed to luxuries and refinements all your life, and I never could bear to see you without them. No; it is impossible—quite impossible!'

Miss Phyllis has plenty of pride, and I suppose she thought she had gone far enough.

'If you call it impossible, of course it is so,' she said coldly. 'Good-bye, then, Godfrey; I am glad to have seen you before you leave for Ireland.'

Well, they made it up; and then they nearly quarrelled again; and then they made it up once more, though not with quite so much warmth as the first time. I hope old Anthony enjoyed it all; I didn't, I know. I could enter into the feelings of both of them, poor young things, and I could understand their misunderstandings, and happy should I have been in their happiness, if they had had any, or the prospect of it; but really I could not wish for such an engagement, and so when they parted at last, telling one another that they were free, and not, perhaps, quite meaning what they said, I could have desired that they had been a little more in earnest over it. However, I was glad that pride had taken the place of common sense and had kept them, at all events, from doing anything rash and irreparable.

When both of them were well out of hearing, we two listeners crept forth from our hiding-places; and no sooner had Mr. Anthony reached the rose-garden than I sprang at his throat and had him down on his back, gasping, choking, and swearing with what breath was left in him, before I discovered that he was not a burglar, and apologised most humbly for my mistake. You never saw a man in such a rage, and his language it is out of the question for me to repeat.

'I am very sorry, sir, very sorry indeed,' said I; 'but finding one of the doors open, I was afraid something must be wrong, and as all the lights downstairs were out, I never thought but what you were in bed long ago.'

'You infernal old ruffian!' he spluttered out, rubbing the back of his head, which he had hit rather hard upon the gravel, 'what business is it of yours whether doors are open or shut? You ought to know very well that many people can't sleep without taking a turn in the fresh air the last thing at night. It's well for you that I didn't happen to have my revolver with me, I can tell you.'

'It is indeed, sir,' answered I humbly; and then I took him indoors and offered to get him warm water, or vinegar and brown paper, or anything else that he might fancy; all of which civilities he acknowledged with surly profanity.

But the next morning he displayed a readiness to forgive and forget which filled me with suspicion. All our guests, including the lawyer, went away to meet the eleven o'clock train, and when Mr. Anthony had been to the door to take leave of the last of them, he laid his hand on my shoulder in quite a friendly and familiar way and pushed me before him into the library.

'Curtis,' said he, trying very hard to look amiable, 'I think it would be a good thing if you and I were to understand one another. Yesterday Mr. Short was needlessly abrupt in his manner with you, and it struck me that you were concealing something. Very natural, I'm sure, if you were, and I should be the last to blame you; still I should be glad if you would be more open with me. Now it is possible that Miss Mortimer may marry, some day.'

Here he paused; so I said: 'More unlikely things have happened, sir.'

'Just so; and a clever fellow like you doesn't require to be told that a will such as my poor brother's is the very thing to bring a host of claimants into the field. Of course it would be a great object with me to avoid the worry and expense of a lawsuit; and therefore, supposing that you were in possession of any evidence bearing upon my poor brother's marriage or the existence of a son, I would gladly make it worth your while to—to—'

'To give it or to withhold it, sir?' asked I, when he hesitated.

'Curtis,' said Mr. Anthony in a low, sad voice, 'you entirely mistake me. Judging me by yourself—no, I don't mean that; but judging me by the common run of men with whom you have associated, you think I would bribe you to suppress facts. Far from it! My one wish is to arrive at them. Come, Curtis; *was* there a baby? Do you know that there was a baby?'

'Mr. Anthony,' replied I steadily, 'I fancy that you know quite as much about this matter as I do.'

And, if you will believe me, the man never had the pluck to ask me what I meant, but turned away and laughed uneasily and said, 'Well, well, you are a queer fellow, Curtis. It is a hundred to one that there never was any marriage or any baby, and I don't

see what chance a claimant could have of proving his case. Still, remember what I have said to you.'

'Thank you, sir; I will bear it in mind if ever a trial comes on,' answered I; and so I left him, feeling almost certain that there was an heir and that he knew it.

Some people are pleased to accuse me of being inquisitive. This is very false; yet I will confess that when a mystery is set before me I am never quite easy in my mind until I have got to the bottom of it; and there I take it that Isaac Newton and Christopher Columbus, and other men of the highest personal character have resembled me. It was only right and proper, I think, that I should wish to find out the truth about a family to which I was deeply attached; and I resolved that I would take measures for doing this as soon as I had bidden adieu to Miss Phyllis and Abbot's Wingham, which sad duty could not now be much longer delayed. Certainly I was not obliged to hurry myself, and Miss Phyllis, in the kindest way, begged me to remain in the house until it suited me to leave; but, much as I should have liked to stay and watch over her for a time, poor dear, I felt that it would be unwise to do so. The most amiable and considerate of men cannot hold a post of confidence, as I had done for so many years, without arousing a certain degree of jealousy and enmity among his inferiors, and now that I no longer had it in my power to dispense rewards and punishments to those who deserved them, I found myself situated much as the right honourable gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government would find himself if he were to go out of office to-morrow; that is to say, that I was seized with a longing for the peace of private life. My intention was to take a house and let lodgings; but whether Ellen and I should set up our establishment in London or in some watering-place I had not yet decided, and it was agreed between us that I should go to town in the first instance and look round for a while. In justice to Ellen, I must say that she is always ready to do as I tell her; and, knowing what women are, I have never been in the habit of telling her more than is needful for her immediate guidance. I did not tell her now about my nocturnal encounter with Mr. Anthony, nor about that gentleman's handsome offer to me on the following morning; but I gave her to understand that she must keep me informed of everything that took place in the house during my absence, and particularly I was to be told at once if Mr. Godfrey made his appearance there;

also whether his addresses were encouraged by Mr. Anthony. Then, all my things being packed and the dog-cart waiting in the stable-yard, I went to say a few last words to Miss Phyllis; and this was a task far more difficult and painful to me.

I found her in the library, looking rather pale and woebegone in her black dress. On the table before her was a mass of papers, left by that lawyer fellow, I suppose, which she was turning over with a puzzled frown, and by the look of her eyes I fancied she might have been shedding a few tears. It went to my heart to leave her like this, without a single person capable of advising her, and I could not help telling her so. Thereupon she brightened up a little and laughed. Somehow or other, I have always been able to make Miss Phyllis laugh; the mere sight of me often seems to do it; though why this should be so I cannot exactly say.

'And yet you desert me, Curtis,' she observed. 'Don't you think that is rather too bad of you?'

'Ah, my dear young lady,' I answered, 'you know very well that you have only to send for me whenever you need me. But in all the troubles and perplexities that are before you it is your own strength of mind that you must chiefly rest upon, and I do implore you to look well before you leap. A fine property, Miss Phyllis, ought not to be treated like so much dirt. There may be things in the world worth giving up twenty thousand a year for, and Mr. Godfrey may be one of them; but——'

'Curtis,' she interrupted, drawing herself up slightly, 'you must not speak as if I were engaged to Mr. Godfrey Wingham, if you please. There is no engagement—nothing of the kind.'

'I am glad to hear it, Miss Phyllis; yet, though there is nothing of the kind now, there may be soon. Moreover, there are many young bachelors in England besides Mr. Godfrey, and you may be sure that Mr. Anthony will have them all here, from the first to the last, sooner than that you should remain single. And again, you must remember that the property goes to the nearest male heir at your death. Mr. Anthony, I fear, would not hesitate to poison any owner of the estate who proposed to outlive him.'

'Curtis, I cannot allow you to say such things. Uncle Anthony has been most kind to me, and—and I am very fond of him.'

'Oh, dear me, Miss Phyllis!' I exclaimed, quite shocked to hear her speak so, 'you never must think of your Uncle Anthony

like that. Don't mind what I said about his poisoning you, because perhaps, after all, the fear of being hung might restrain him; but for goodness' sake, don't mistake him for your friend! Why, even a good man, placed as he is—even I myself might feel tempted to wish that you would marry and to do all I could to urge you to it. It's human nature, Miss Phyllis.'

'If that is all,' she answered, with a rather doleful little smile, 'you may set your mind at ease, Curtis. I have quite decided that I shall never marry.'

Of course I knew what that meant; but what was the use of talking? I got some comfort from the thought that Mr. Godfrey was safe in Ireland by that time; and if he would only stay there long enough, perhaps somebody with a little more money might turn up. That was the best that I could hope for.

I never should have reached my present age and kept my health as I have done if I had allowed myself to brood over other people's misfortunes, or even over my own. What can't be cured must be endured, and there is no better way of enduring a gloomy outlook than turning your back to it. It did seem to me that things at Abbot's Wingham promised badly just then for poor Miss Phyllis; so, as I could do nothing to help her, and as worrying myself would have been worse than useless, I went up to London, where I was welcomed by many old friends, and where I thoroughly appreciated a luxury which I had not enjoyed for a quarter of a century: to wit, the sense of being my own master. My first duty was to make inquiries as to the renting of a house in a fashionable quarter and the letting out of the same in apartments to families and single gentlemen. I could write a good deal about the discouraging information which I received upon this subject, and indeed I should like to do so; but I forbear, as my great desire is to avoid being tedious to the readers of these pages, who, I hope, are unlikely ever to be reduced to letting lodgings. It is enough to say that I attended to my own business for a week or more before I found myself with spare time enough on my hands to visit a lodging-house of a less aristocratic kind in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park. I hardly expected to find Mrs. Perkins, who had kept the house when poor Mrs. Wingham occupied the first floor so many years ago, still there; but Mrs. Perkins herself it was who opened the door for me, and she was naturally flattered when I recognised her at once and declared that she did not look a day older.

From people in that rank of life one must not look for good manners; so I pardoned her allusions to my stoutness and the difficulty that she had in believing that I could be the 'imperent young man' who had been wont to carry notes and messages to her first-floor lodger in years gone by. What did vex me was that, after drinking tea with her twice and listening to many long stories about her children and grandchildren which were entirely devoid of interest, I found that I had been wasting time and patience upon her. All she knew was that Mrs. Wingham had left her somewhat suddenly one morning, and since then she had seen no more of her. As for a baby, she was quite certain that she had neither heard tell of one nor detected signs of its approach. Nor could she think of anyone who was likely to be better informed, unless it might be Mrs. Wingham's maid, who had gone away with her—'a fresh-coloured young woman by the name of Sarah.' I myself remembered this maid; but it was plain that I had small chance of discovering a person about whom all I could say was that her name was Sarah and that she had been a fresh-coloured young woman five-and-twenty years ago. Therefore I bade adieu to Mrs. Perkins, and, for the time being, rested upon my oars.

I spent a matter of two months in London, looking about me, and during that time I received several exceedingly well-written letters from Ellen. When I say that they were well written I do not mean that they were well spelt, but that they told me all I wanted to know, which to my mind is vastly more important. Depend upon it, it is a great mistake to over-educate the lower classes. A superior person, such as some whom I could name, will educate himself from pure love of knowledge and because his brain is large enough to hold that and enable him to do his daily duties into the bargain; but the ordinary run of people cannot afford so to strain their intelligence, and if you begin to teach your cook natural science and modern languages, you may count upon sitting down to a vile dinner every day of your life. Now my view is that a cook should be a cook first and (if you will insist upon it) a mathematician and geologist afterwards. However, I am aware that these remarks have been made before and, like most other wise remarks, have been disregarded. Not wishing to give fools a chance of sneering at an excellent woman, I will not quote Ellen's letters; but I will say of them, as I said to her at the time, that they fully satisfied me. From them I learnt that

Mr. Godfrey had volunteered for the expedition which was just then being despatched to Ashantee to chastise the king of that country and deprive him of his umbrella; likewise, that Miss Phyllis was very unhappy about this, on account of the deadly nature of the West African climate, but that she would not say a word to detain her cousin, who had been down to Abbot's Wingham to bid her good-bye; and finally (what surprised me a good deal) that Mr. Anthony, so far from throwing the young people together, as his interest clearly demanded, had been doing his very best to stir up strife between them, and had hardly been able to hide his satisfaction when news came from the Horse Guards that Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to accept the services of Mr. Godfrey Wingham of the 150th regiment for the forthcoming campaign.

This unprincipled old Anthony, it appeared, had told Miss Phyllis, who told Ellen, who told me, that he had a poor opinion of his nephew. Godfrey, he feared, was only too like the other young men of the present day—capable, it might be, of love, yet quite incapable of making sacrifices for the sake of the woman whom he loved. In short, he suspected that his nephew's secret desire was to be relieved from an engagement to a great heiress, whose wedding-day would change her into a pauper. And this the old fox insinuated with such craft, with so many hesitations and regrets and breakings of the voice, that Ellen, for one, though knowing him to be the prince of liars (because I had told her so), was disposed to think that he must be sincere in what he said, even if, as was to be hoped, he was mistaken. What Miss Phyllis thought about it she did not know; but certain it was that Mr. Godfrey was upon the point of sailing for Ashantee, and that the chances were much against his ever coming back again.

All this puzzled and worried me beyond measure; for I do hate underhand ways, especially when I cannot get at the drift of them; therefore I let Ellen know that I should run down to Wingham for a few days to see her and impart to her my views as to our future joint career of usefulness. My intention had been to put up at the Black Boar in the village; but when my young mistress heard of my proposed visit she declared that she would be deeply affronted if I slept beneath any roof but her own; and so it was that I found myself once more in the old house and welcomed by all as warmly as I could expect. The jealousy of

Richards the butler was a thing I had never cared to notice, and could afford to make allowance for.

But if some people were really glad to see me back, and others were civil enough to say that they were, there was one person who had no more sense or command over himself than to ask me angrily what the devil I wanted in that house. It was on the evening of my arrival that Mr. Anthony, who had brought his wife over from Upton with him 'to keep poor Phyllis company for a week,' met me unexpectedly in one of the corridors and burst out with this rude greeting. I was very pleased that he should so forget himself; for it showed that he was afraid of me. And why should he be afraid of me, unless he thought that I was in his secret? And what was that secret likely to be but his guilty knowledge that he was not the late Mr. Wingham's nearest male relative?

'Well, sir,' I answered, looking straight into his shallow, shift eyes, 'I have come chiefly to set about paying off some old scores and putting things right that have been allowed to go wrong longer than they ought to have been.'

This was pretty bold of me; but I could always get out of it by saying that I alluded to certain tradesmen in Wingham and the neighbourhood; for my late master—in spite of that ungenerous reference to me in his will—had for many years left the entire control of his household expenditure in my hands. My object, of course, was to startle Mr. Anthony, and therein I was quite successful. He glared at me like a wild beast, without being able to get out a word, and I looked for nothing less than the offer of a large bribe to hold my tongue. I was certain that that was what he was thinking of; but probably he abandoned the plan as too risky, for he ended by laughing contemptuously.

'Want to pay off old scores, eh?' said he; 'you always were a rancorous rascal. Well, I suppose you know your own business best; but I should have thought paying off old scores was a game that several people could play at; and there is more than one who owes you a grudge in these parts, if report speaks truly.'

'Report isn't worth much without proof, sir,' said I.

'No, it isn't: you're about right there,' he returned significantly. And so we parted.

Now this might seem a tolerably good start to have made, and so I thought at the time; but, to my great vexation, I could get no farther. I need not say that I paid a visit to Upton and sounded the muddy minds of the servants there; but a very few

minutes sufficed to show me that they were as ignorant as I was, and as for extorting anything in the shape of an admission from Mr. Anthony himself I knew better than to attempt such a hopeless task. Thus I was forced to the conclusion that there was nothing for it but to trust to chance, a thing which I hate to do; and so discouraged was I by the thought of there being a mystery afoot and my being quite unable to fathom it, as well as by the sight of Miss Phyllis's pale face and old Anthony's sour one, and by the general sadness of things, that in a fit of petulance I resolved to wash my hands of the whole business and told Ellen that she might name the day. Ellen, however, was in no hurry. She did not want to leave her place and her young mistress; nor did she see any good in our being married before I had a house to take her to. Therefore it was finally decided that I should look about me a little longer, and, after thanking Miss Phyllis for her kind hospitality and whispering to her to keep a good heart, I prepared to depart once more.

It was found convenient that I should leave by the last train—and the reason of this, as I well remember, was that Mr. Anthony had some parcels to send down to the station which could not be ready until after dinner. So it was quite dark when I got into the dog-cart and was driven across the park at a smart pace by a young groom of the name of James. I was in the act of opening my mouth to say to this young man that I hoped he could see where he was driving to when something happened which hoisted me abruptly from my seat, and, after sending me flying through the air with the velocity of a sky-rocket, landed me all of a heap in a nice soft ditch. James, who had not been quite so fortunate, having cut himself a good bit about the hands and knees, was up before I was, seeing to the horse; and a fine job we had of it to keep the poor beast quiet and extricate him from the devilish trap which had been laid for him and us.

Miss Phyllis had taken a fancy to have the house connected with the station by telegraph, and the men who were employed in carrying out her instructions had been working until dark. They said afterwards that they were positive that they had left the wire coiled up some yards away from the road, and I fully believed them. Supposing them to be speaking the truth, it was evident that some person, with malicious intent, must have stretched this wire across the place where we were sure to pass; and if we were not killed, it certainly was not the fault of that

malicious person. The poor horse had become so entangled with his plunges and struggles and was so badly hurt that he never was any use again, and there are some scars about the person of James the groom which he will bear to his dying day ; but I do not suppose that such trifles as these disturbed Mr. Anthony's mind for a moment. What is far more likely to have distressed him is that I, for whose benefit this pleasant little surprise had been designed, got off scot-free. For I will not insult the intelligence of my readers by suggesting that any one of them can be in doubt as to who was the author of our misfortune. It may be true, as Mr. Anthony afterwards declared, with uncalled-for eagerness, that I had enemies in the neighbourhood ; how could it be otherwise, when I had collected and paid all bills for five-and-twenty years ?—and to assert that I demanded larger perquisites than were my just due is simply to assert what is not the case. But I will say for these enemies of mine that there was not a man among them who would have stooped to so cowardly, cruel, and unmanly a method of revenge as was adopted by this disgrace to the name of a country gentleman and justice of the peace.

Nevertheless, I saw at once that the mere fact of his having been out walking rather late was not sufficient to build an accusation upon, so I made none, nor did I even point out to Miss Phyllis how little I had wronged her uncle in charging him with murderous inclinations. Only, when I was leaving the next day, and when he actually had the effrontery to offer me a sovereign, after congratulating me upon my escape, I said, with perfect good humour, ' No, thank you, sir ; you don't owe me anything just at present, but I owe you one, and it shall be my endeavour to pay you, if we both live long enough.'

This incident really did me a power of good ; for it not only restored me my self-respect by showing me how anxious that old villain was to make an end of me, but it put me on my mettle and caused me to resolve that I would prove myself a match for him. I will not dwell upon the efforts that I made, and the ingenuity that I displayed in the course of the next few months ; because, unhappily, I did not meet with the success that I deserved, and it ought to be nearly as painful to read about the failures of a virtuous and capable man as it is to write about them. I will only mention that during this time—nearly the whole of which I spent in London—I continued to receive frequent letters from my faithful Ellen, and that I heard from her how Mr. Anthony, showing

his hand at last, had casually introduced several attractive young bachelors to the mistress of Abbot's Wingham. According to Ellen's account, these gentlemen had, without exception, fallen deeply in love with Miss Phyllis (small blame to them!) and would have married her and never given a thought to her fortune; but they had met with such scant encouragement that most of them had gone dejectedly away, without having even ventured to ask for what they wanted. Ellen was persuaded that there was only one man in the world whom her mistress would ever consent to marry; and whether he would be in the world much longer Heaven only knew.

Heaven, in the meantime, seemed to be taking pretty good care of Mr. Godfrey. I read in the newspapers of his gallant conduct at the battle of Amoaful, and of his entry into Coomassie with Sir Garnet Wolseley and the other heroes; and if only he had been a richer man, I should have heartily rejoiced to hear of his so distinguishing himself. Even as it was, I could not help being proud of him, having always had a weakness for this young gentleman.

I forget who it was that first suggested to me that Southsea might be as good a seaside town as any for me to settle in. I did not much fancy the place myself, as I have always been accustomed to high society, and Southsea is not exactly what you could call aristocratic. But then I reflected that the aristocracy does not patronise apartments much anywhere, and that a large and constantly changing population, both naval and military, might pay better in the long run than consumptive families at Bournemouth, or Jews at Brighton. So to Southsea I went, and was so taken with the appearance of a house which I saw there, that I remained some weeks trying to come to terms with the owner; and, as it happened, I was still in the place at the time when a part of our victorious little army was expected to disembark at Portsmouth on its return from West Africa. I should have gone down to see them land in any case, because I think it is only fair to pay the tribute of a British cheer, when occasion offers, to those who are kind enough to fight our battles for us; but what made it absolutely essential that I should be present on this occasion was that I had been charged with a commission by Miss Phyllis—or perhaps it would be more respectful to say by Ellen.

Having heard (wrote Ellen) that Mr. Godfrey was due at Portsmouth immediately, she had thought that I should be glad

of the opportunity of touching my hat to him, or perhaps even of shaking hands with him, if he would condescend so far. And I was to mention—not as coming from anybody in particular, but merely as a circumstance which might interest him more or less—that Miss Phyllis was pretty well in health, and that she had read with true cousinly pride the reports of his desperate valour given by the newspapers; which reports *she* believed to have been rather under than over-stated, although *some people*, who pretended to be his *friends* (these words were heavily underscored in Ellen's letter), seemed to take a strange pleasure in making light of them.

I was not quite sure whether it would be wise to deliver this message exactly as it stood; but I was resolved, at any rate, to be the first to welcome Mr. Godfrey back to his native land, and, if he seemed to show himself worthy of it, perhaps I would let him know what his cousin thought of him. And I did most sincerely rejoice at this evidence that Miss Phyllis was at last beginning to see her dear Uncle Anthony in his true colours.

I was down at Portsmouth harbour long before the transport was signalled; nor was I the only one to act thus foolishly. I found quite a large number of people fidgeting about and asking one another questions which they must have known could not be answered; and as luck (or it may have been Providence) would have it, one of them thought fit to address such an inquiry to me.

'I wish, sir,' she said, 'that you could tell me when my husband is likely to come ashore.'

She was a very stout woman, and I could quite understand her objection to remaining on foot longer than was necessary. 'Madam,' I replied, with my usual politeness, 'I wish I could. Your husband, no doubt, is an officer in one of the regiments.'

This I said because I perceived, from her flowery bonnet and her purple kid gloves with one button, as well as from her truly appalling boots, that her husband could be nothing of the kind. I like to give people a little innocent gratification when I can, having learnt that kindness costs nothing, while there is always the possibility of its proving a paying investment.

My fat friend looked pleased. 'Not exactly an officer, sir,' she answered; 'that is, not a commissioned officer—though as near to it as he can be. Colour-Sergeant Blake of the 114th Fusiliers he is.'

'An uncommonly fine regiment too,' said I. And so, I dare-

say, it is, though I did not remember ever to have heard of it before.

'The very words used by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge at our last inspection!' cried the fat woman. "'An uncommon fine regiment," he says; "as fine a regiment as there is in the service," he says. Not that I care much for fair words myself. A little more consideration for our health and a little less shifting of us about from pillar to post would please me a deal better. I tell Blake it's time he gave up soldiering.'

'Madam,' said I, 'we can't afford it. The country can't afford it. Without good non-commissioned officers we are nowhere, and *you* know how rare good non-commissioned officers are in these days.'

Thus we became very friendly and had quite a long talk. It certainly did strike me once or twice, during the course of it, that this woman reminded me of somebody whom I had seen before; but I never should have been able to put a name to her if she had not recognised me. 'Lord, have mercy upon us!' she exclaimed all of a sudden, 'I do believe it's Mr. Curtis.'

I admitted that I was that unworthy man, and then she asked me whether I had forgotten Sarah Jackson, as used to be maid to poor Mrs. Wingham.

So overpowered was I by this abrupt and most important disclosure that if Mrs. Blake had been less stout and less hot, I really think I should have embraced her then and there. As it was, I remembered that I was an engaged man and only grasped her by both hands. 'My dear Sarah!' I cried, 'my dear and valued old friend, let us go and sit down somewhere, and allow me to have the privilege of offering you a little refreshment. A meeting like this must not be a dry one.'

I thought, from the look of her complexion, that she would not disdain my civility, and she did not. Only the refreshment which I presently provided for her in a private room at the Mariner's Rest Inn failed to loosen her tongue in the way that I intended it to do. My desire was (and I am sure that everyone will appreciate my delicacy in this) to get all that I could out of her without letting her into any family secrets in return, but she was either too clever for me or too dull, and, after much laborious pumping, I obtained nothing more than a certainty that she was keeping something back from me. So, as I am no believer in half-measures, I told her, at last, exactly how matters stood and pointed

out to her what a very fine thing it might be for her and Sergeant Blake if she were able to prove the existence of a male heir to the late Mr. Wingham.

'Oh, sir! — oh, Mr. Curtis!' she exclaimed, with a great show of agitation, 'it isn't the reward that I look at; it's whether I ought to break the solemn promise that I made to my poor mistress. And as for the heir, as you call him, being alive now, it's clean beyond me to prove any such thing.'

'My good Sarah,' said I, 'you never shall be asked to do so. That part of the business, and of course also the greater part of the reward (if any) will be mine; but if you can give me some clue as to the fate of the baby whose birth you have already admitted, rely upon it that I will not forget you.'

I could not hope to keep this historical memoir within reasonable limits if I were to write down all that Mrs. Blake told me in her own words. According to my experience, a woman should always be allowed to say what she has to say in the roundabout style which women love, because trying to keep them to the point only makes them lose their heads and perhaps their tempers, as well as your time. Therefore I bore patiently with all Sarah's digressions and anecdotes and doubts whether she ought to go on, and so forth, and I don't think it took her much more than an hour to put me in possession of facts which, if she had been a man, she might have imparted to me in five minutes.

The facts, even when stripped of the picturesque garb in which she clothed them, were romantic enough for anybody. It appeared that Mrs. Wingham, immediately after her final quarrel with her husband, made a discovery which threw her into a state of quite needless flurry. She was excitable and imaginative by nature, and, having made up her mind that she would be dead before many months were over (the most certain way of killing yourself, as I have always understood), what did she do but fly to her brother-in-law, the Reverend Godfrey Wingham, whom she implored to watch over her orphan child when she should be no more and never on any account to let its wicked father get hold of it. The Reverend Godfrey, at that time incumbent of a parish in the east of London, was a worthy man, though a weak one, and his wife matched him in every respect. This good couple determined to give shelter to their sister-in-law, who died, sure enough, when her boy was born, and after that, they could think of no wiser plan than to adopt the child and pass him off as their own.

This was the more easy because the reverend gentleman's health had been giving way for some time, and he had now resolved to accept a chaplaincy in the West Indies. Thither they betook themselves, taking Sarah Jackson with them as nurse, and there they lived in peace and happiness for nearly three years. Sarah thought that her master was sometimes visited by qualms of conscience; but he obtained a very sudden release from these and all other troubles when the yellow fever broke out. That terrible disease seized him and his wife on the same day, and scarcely more than twenty-four hours afterwards they were both under ground. The authorities wound up his affairs, and, after waiting to hear from England, sent the boy home, under the care of a good-natured lady, to his uncle Anthony, as the elder brother, Mr. Frederick Wingham, was abroad, and his whereabouts quite uncertain. Sarah, thus thrown upon her own resources on a distant shore, thought she could do no better than marry Full Private Blake of the 114th, and from that time to the day when she so fortunately came across me at Portsmouth she had never heard the name of Wingham mentioned.

Such was Sarah's story, and how profoundly moved I was by it it is needless to say. But I saw, of course, that it required confirmation; and as the time was so short that I could not immediately decide what course to adopt, I thought it best to bind her over to secrecy for the present, warning her that if she repeated to anyone else what she had told to me, she would lay herself open to arrest on a charge of malicious slander, for which the penalty would be, at the very least, six months' imprisonment with hard labour, besides total loss of character. This alarmed her so much that she began to cry, but I promised her that not a hair of her head should be harmed so long as she obeyed my instructions, and when she had given me her address, I bade her a friendly farewell.

Shortly afterwards I was shaking hands warmly with my dear Mr. Godfrey, whom I was delighted to see in the best possible health and as brown as King Coffee himself. It would have been cruel to buoy him up with hopes which might never be realised, so I told him nothing of the great change in his fortunes which I trusted was at hand; but, under the circumstances, I thought myself justified in delivering Ellen's message in full, whereat he was so pleased that he forced a five-pound note upon me.

That same evening I went to London to see the lawyers. Some

men, after having been treated as that ungentlemanly Short had treated me, might have been disposed to entrust their affairs to other hands; but if I had done that I should have had the family lawyers against me perhaps, and, pleasant as it would have been to beat them, it seemed safer and more respectable to have them on our side. Nor had I the vanity to suppose that a plain, straightforward man would be able to establish the truth without professional aid.

Mr. Short received me just as I might have anticipated. 'So you knew about this marriage all along, did you? And you thought proper to conceal it, eh? Now mind what you are about, sir; be very careful, or you may find yourself in a position which you won't like,' &c. &c. But I soon let him see that this sort of thing would never do. I had told him next to nothing when he began hectoring, and I gave him to understand that, unless I was met with the respect which was my due, I should look out for another firm of solicitors with better manners. And after that we got on together more pleasantly.

Yet it was a long time before we could complete our chain of evidence, and during that time events did not stand still. For Mr. Godfrey hurried down as soon as he could to Upton (where, no doubt, his uncle was delighted to welcome him), and the very first time that he and Miss Phyllis found themselves alone the cloud that had arisen between them was dispelled. Our dear young lady was able to convince him that the management of a large property was a thing for which she had neither taste nor capacity; and so, disregarding their uncle's opposition, they behaved with the impetuosity natural to their age, and determined to be married without loss of time. Upon this, Mr. Short, though not quite ready with his case, felt bound to speak out, but old Anthony roared with laughter at what he called 'one of that rascally Joe Curtis's lies,' and defied us to do our worst; while the young couple would not defer their wedding for even a few months to please us. Thus it came to pass that, in due course of time, Mr. Godfrey was compelled to bring an action against his revered uncle, and the great case of *Wingham v. Wingham* was set agoing.

The whole of the above case, except that part of it which I spent in the witness-box, and which I did not enjoy (because very nasty things were said about me and old stories raked up which had nothing to do with the question, and the judge, if he had done his duty, would have stopped them)—with that exception, I

say, the whole of the case was followed by me with the keenest satisfaction; but what pleased me more than anything else—inso-much that I almost forgave Sarah Blake for having trusted the lawyers with a document which she had never shown to me—was the reading in Court of the following letter, dated some twenty-three years back, and addressed to the Reverend Godfrey Wingham in the West Indies:—

‘Dear Godfrey,—Since you ask me for advice, I should say that what you speak of as your “duty to the dead and the living” is in no way inconsistent with your keeping that brat and calling him your own. Fred can do what he chooses with his property, which, as you know, is not entailed. He is just as likely to leave it to you or me as to his son—if your young friend really is his son—and precious unlikely to leave it to any of us in my opinion. I don’t see why you should undertake to feed an extra mouth; but I suppose you know your own business best.

‘Your affectionate brother,
‘ANTHONY WINGHAM.’

When this letter, which had been discovered in her master’s pocket, after his death, by Sarah Blake, and which she had concealed in obedience to what she had believed to be his wishes, was submitted to Anthony, he lacked the courage to perjure himself; and after that he had not, of course, a leg to stand upon, for his absurd and scandalous assertion that he had always believed the boy to be the illegitimate son of his brother Godfrey did him more harm than good. Indeed, I suppose that we need never have gone into court at all if Sarah had thought fit to produce the above lines a little sooner; but she declared that she had not been able to make up her mind to bring such disgrace upon the family; and also, I am sorry to say, that she harboured some foolish ill-feeling against me for having frightened her that day at Portsmouth, ‘which Mr. Curtis had no call to act so,’ she said. Yet, upon the whole, I was just as well pleased that things should have gone as they did, because the judge, who had not thought it worth while to protect me from slander, came out very handsomely in his remarks upon Mr. Anthony Wingham’s behaviour; and I believe that when that gentleman returned from the Continent, where he took his family for a year, the whole county showed him the cold shoulder, until Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey, for the sake of his wife and children, displayed such an example of Christian charity and forgiveness as

I never could have brought myself to in their place. But he was removed from the Commission of the Peace, and I did hear that he was burnt in effigy last Guy Fawkes' Day in the village.

One thing distressed me greatly, and that was that Mr. Godfrey should have thought that I desired any reward for restoring his rights to him beyond that of seeing him and Miss Phyllis happily settled in their own home at Abbot's Wingham. For a long time I felt it due to myself to decline anything that might look like a recompense, and it was only when I saw that my repeated refusals were really wounding him that I consented to accept the freehold of that house in Mayfair which Ellen and I have for some years been letting out in apartments, and where I should be pleased to see all the readers of this narrative, if I could find room for them; only I am told that I must not give names or addresses. However, we are doing very fairly well, without need to apply to strangers; and I may add that it is chiefly because so many persons of the highest distinction who have been kind enough to patronise me have begged me to tell them all the ins and outs of the famous Wingham case, that I have set forth the whole facts on paper as above.

In conclusion, I will only repeat what I said to the defendant's counsel at the trial: 'To speak the simple truth, sir, is always my aim, but I daresay you know as well as anybody what a difficult thing it is to do that.'

BOYS' BLUNDERS.

MANY of us are weary of speeches about education; some people dread over-education, others dread over-pressure. It may be a source of some solace to such people to find that this supposed superfluity of education and pressure has not yet succeeded in making boys incapable of blunders, which imply a nimbleness of mind and vividness of imagination rather than fatigue of brain.

The blunders to be here mentioned are genuine. They have come under the notice of the writer in the course of ten years' work as a schoolmaster, with the exception of some which have been placed at his disposal by a pedagogic friend. It may be added that examinations are productive of this particular fruit. Work is nearly over; the gaze of the master is averted; the boy waves his pen in triumph, as though it were a flag, and writes words of mystic meaning. The term's extremity is the boy's opportunity.

It is proposed to classify, so far as may be, boys' blunders, and thus prepare the way for a scientific study of a most interesting subject.

Perhaps the common cause of error is a greater or less degree of similarity between two Latin words, two English words, a Greek and Latin word; a kindred source of error is a confusion between a Latin and English word, *i.e.* a supposition that a Latin word can be adequately represented by the English word most near it in form. To this class of mistake the writer has given the name of Anglomania. Another class of error is to be traced to an unwise use of the dictionary. This is so subtle an ailment, and so hard a one for simple folk to guard against, that it may be named, on the analogy of malaria, Dictionaria. Less common causes of mistake are to be found in false analogy, association of ideas, love of rhyme, and a desire to substitute something familiar and intelligible for something which to the writer was unfamiliar and unintelligible.

1. Similarity of form or sound drove a boy to translate *ecquis* 'with horses,' and '*æquo animo ferre*' 'to carry on horseback. Geography is enriched by the 'Isthmus of Panorama,' and astronomers are astounded to hear of the 'sun entering into the truth';

the latter marvel represents the words '*sol ineunte vere.*' Even Holy Scripture is altered (though '*litteris Bibuli recitatis*' is translated by 'the letters of the Bible having been read,' thus showing that the study is not neglected); and so St. Stephen had no interest for one boy beyond the fact that 'he made the first engine'; while the longer form of the name Silas was stated to be Silenus, 'who,' as the examiner gravely remarked, 'was quite a different person.' Matins, being somewhat ecclesiastical, may be mentioned in this connection. It was defined as 'something they wear on their feet'; the word seems to be confused with pattens. A man provided with these and little else might be described as 'three parts naked,' and this condition was thought by one scholar to be expressed by '*nudius tertius.*' The poor equipment of this imaginary man recalls a dialogue recently overheard. Boy A: 'I say, what does "*pauper equidem*" mean?' Boy B: 'Why, "a poor knight," of course, you ass.' Boy A: ' "A poor night!" that would be *pauper nox*, you fool.' Perhaps this poor knight was in the mind of one who wrote 'his relations snore by chance' as the equivalent for '*ejus casu sternuntur proximi.*' This scholar disregarded the order of the words, and was not particular 'to a T.' A painful consciousness of a common disregard of law and order drove a youth to declare that 'ten laws of men ought to be written'; this would seem to refer to a pre-Sinaitic period. The original version merely says, '*decemviri legibus scribundis.*' Another rendering of these same words evidently dates from a post-Sinaitic era: 'the laws were written in December.' In connection with Sinai it may be said that, in answer to a question intended to draw forth 'Sihon,' came 'Magog.' This student obviously was more conversant with the city of London than with his Bible; such accidents must occur in a foundation that is at once civic and religious.

The law-student before named would be interested to hear that 'it is not lawful to know the cause of his high'; the Roman writer merely says, '*non licet sui commodi causa nocere alteri*'; the English is obscure. One of the errors is shared by a boy who gives 'higher and higher' as the English of '*alter et alter.*' Sometimes personal prejudice warps the translator's judgment; no follower of Walton would have thought '*feriæ illæ piscatorum*' to mean 'those beasts of fishermen'; nor would a misogynist have translated '*cælestes implicitura comas*' by 'about to join her companions in heaven.'

So, again, a certain rule of Latin syntax mentions 'knowledge, memory, and other affections of the mind.' One who regarded Latin syntax as Dr. Blimber's pupils regarded the 'ancient Romans' wrote 'other afflictions of the mind'; while another, instead of '*domos*, rarely *domus*,' wrote 'really *domus*.' A like antipathy to Latin accident made a boy describe nominatives as 'the ancient foes of the Britons.' Memory of a noble sport led a boy to twist '*hic mos apud Thracas instituitur*' into 'they caught this mouse near Thrace'; being skilled in the art of slaughter, he gives 'destroyed badly' as a fair representation of '*perdere maluit*.' So our Sinaitic friend finds legal language in '*saltus Dictæos*,' which he translates as 'aforesaid groves.' A chemical boy thinks Esau to have been allured by a 'mess of potash'; a young farmer writes, 'Which field? he asked,' for '*rogavit quid agerent*'; a man-milliner says, 'I am clothed in white,' and 'is he clothed in gold?' while the original has respectively '*vescor albo*' and '*vescitur aura*?' Recent experience of domestic discomfort must have caused a young scholar to see 'such a house!' in '*ite domum*.' In order to realise the series of confusions contained in the following translation, the reader must turn to Horace's 'Odes,' I. xvi. 13 *et seq.* We will take the words in the approved crib fashion:—*Prometheus* (Prometheus) *fertur* (brings) *coactus addere* (an unwilling adder) *principi Limo* (to Prince Linus); *particulam* (a part) *desectam* (follows him) *undique* (over the waves) *et* (and) *vim* (I may wish) *apposuisse* (to have placed) *insani leonis* (the mad lion) *nostro stomacho* (in our stomach). Anglomania crops up here, '*addere*' being translated by 'adder.' 'To make a treaty with joyful Greeks' is a pleasing performance, but does not fairly represent '*Argolicas fœdare latebras*,' even though *fœdus* is a treaty and *latus* is joyful.

Personal preference must have made a young grammarian write the 'potative mood' in place of the more usual form, 'optative'; and recent potation must be held accountable for the remark, 'the optative mood is a mood in a verb when anybody knows you have done anything.' There is a lack of 'lucidity' in this statement. A kindred preference, coupled with association of words (*fruor* and *vescor* occurring in the same rule), led a boy to write 'truly I always feed' as the English of '*vere fruor semper*'; while such association, apart from personal preference, drove a youth to utter 'Emmanuel' as the English of the Latin

word '*victor*,' and another to define a dependent sentence as 'one that hangs from its clause'—the pun was unintentional. So another defines 'Republican' as 'sinner,' less from political prejudice than from imperfect remembrance of Scriptural language; and a chubby-faced chorister altered Milton's 'full-voiced choir' to 'full-faced choir.' A similar effect of association of words may be traced in the reply to the question as to the essential feature of English verse: 'Quantity' had been stated to be important in Latin verse; 'Quality' naturally suggested itself as of corresponding import in English. May this authority bear that in mind when he becomes a poet!

2. The mind of man loves to substitute something intelligible for that which is unintelligible, just as English sailors changed 'Bellerophon,' which had for them no meaning, into 'Bully Ruffian,' which conveyed a definite idea. So an English boy, seeing no sense in the word 'ycleped,' makes Milton state that 'in heaven yelped Euphrosyne.' The same tendency urged another to say, 'Find out some uncouth swell,' in place of the usual reading, 'cell.' A third described someone as 'a man three feet high.' It appeared upon inquiry that this person had been called by the master a 'freebooter'; this word conveying no idea, had been altered by the boy to 'three-footer,' and this had by him been expressed more elegantly in words quoted above. This dwarf may have belonged to a people referred to in a passage, '*trepidabat populus*,' 'the people was three-footed.' This last error is due to ambitious etymology, of which we shall say more later on. The Bellerophon class of error finds another exemplification in an answer to a legal question. A young law-student stated that the statute of *Præmunire* had to do with 'purple boots,' which were by it declared illegal. He had apparently been told something about 'Papal Bulls'; these words conveying no idea to his mind, he had substituted others more familiar and intelligible. Painful recollections must have led another to describe a 'weeping birch' as 'a birch that makes you weep,' while experiences of another kind made his friend define 'eating cares' as 'troubles because you are tired of eating,' the triumvirate being completed by one who said that 'spoiler's hand' meant 'father's hand, because he spoils you'; if so, how wise in any boy to 'tremble' and 'shrink' from its corrupting influence!

3. Reference was made just now to ambitious etymology as a source of error. For instance, '*vultus*' comes from '*volo*,' 'because

everyone would wish to have a face'; '*vinum*' from '*vivo*,' because 'wine makes you lively'—it is to be hoped that in these days of 'Bands of Hope' the youth was not speaking from personal experience. 'Radical comes from *rado*, to shave, because it is a thing that you can cut from'; perhaps Irish landlords would say rather that Radicals prefer shaving others, and shaving them rather close. Another authority derives the word from *radius*, a ray: 'a radical is when the sun sends its rays upon you.' There is a want of clearness in the remark, but it seems to imply that Radicalism is an aggravated form of lunacy. It is well known that boys are by nature Conservative; some seem to have a prejudice against Dissent, probably because of its connection with Radicalism. By a boy with such bias a Nonconformist is defined as 'a person who cannot form anything'; while another, with malicious misspelling, calls them 'the decenters of old times.' A Conservative is described as 'a person interested in politics who does not like Mr. Gladstone.' There is a *μείωσις* in that statement which is very attractive. One boy shows some ingenuity in defining two things of which he does not know much. 'A Conservative is a person who does not wish to disestablish the Church.' 'The Established Church is one which the Liberals want to disestablish.' Franchise proved a stumbling-block to some: one defined it as 'anything belonging to the French people,' while another states it to be a 'sort of scent.' The latter scholar must have been thinking of Frangipanni—if that be the way to spell the unfamiliar word. There was some confusion in the mind of one who, being asked to state what he knew of Wesley, wrote, 'Wesley was the founder of the Wesleyan Chapel, who was afterwards called Lord Wellington; a monument was erected to him in Hyde Park, but it has been taken down lately.' The mention of one great name suggests others. 'Luther introduced Christianity a thousand years ago; his birthday was in November 1883. He was once a Pope; he lived in the time of the Rebellion of Worms.' 'Socrates was no use at fighting; he was very ugly; he had a flat nose, his eyes stuck out; he destroyed some statues, and had to drink the shamrock.' Being asked to give the name of the 'greatest living poet,' one boy wrote, 'Homer, whose poems are the best, as stated in Question V.' On turning to that question, we find the words 'What poet was wiser than Homer? What poem is better?' This sentence, which was to be turned into Latin, had been meant merely to test knowledge of genders and such

details; the earnest-minded scholar found in it information of modern interest. A schoolfellow gives the following list of Homer's writings: '1, Homer's Essays; 2, Virgil; 3, the Æneid; 4, Paradise Lost.' It was a student of riper years who, being asked to state his views on 'the Homeric question,' wrote, 'Some people say that these poems were not written by Homer, but by another man of the same name.'

Being requested to explain 'balance of power,' a boy misread it as 'balance of poker,' and said, 'It means making the poker stand up stright (*sic*), e.g. on your hand.' The misplacement of a letter may be serious: fancy a genitive absolute being 'casual'! The youth was careless who translated '*iterum missi*' by 'they sent him on a journey,' but the senders are more blameworthy if they took so little care that 'he set out battered'; the Latin is '*quasi perfecto (munere)*.' This youth evidently connects *quasi* with *quatio*, and *perfecto* with *proficisci*.

Confusion is sometimes worse confounded by the use of the modern pronunciation of Latin. Only by a combination of this with ordinary carelessness and a touch of Anglomaniæ could we get 'I lived here' for '*vicisti iram*.' The same tendency is to be observed in '*huc tenere*,' 'they held their hook'; '*aut captæ aut mersæ*,' 'they were captured without mercy.' Anglomaniæ crops up again in '*posceris exta bovis*,' 'you have seen a large bull,' or 'he is gone out with the oxen.' In each case 'extra' is in what serves the translator for a mind. Thus '*volucrem Hebrum*' is 'a Hebrew bird,' '*cave vicino*' 'a neighbouring cave,' '*cava dolia*' 'slaves in a cave'—here is a confusion between *dolium* and *δοῦλος*—the latter word is elsewhere translated by 'dollar,' and is said to be worth 'five minæ.' '*Sacerdotes iverunt supplices*' is thought by one authority to mean 'the priestesses sent him supplies,' by another 'the priestesses came to him in surplices.' In contrast with these well-clad ladies, some things are said to be 'naked with fear'; the Latin is '*nuda fere*.' It seems more likely that dogs should be able '*bibere currentes*' than 'to drink currants,' especially if it is their nature to 'avoid (*sic*) novelty,' as is declared to be the case with men; the Latin writer says '*est natura hominum novitatis avida*,' but great minds will always differ. '*Facies*' can mean two things; it is possible to choose the wrong one: '*quod optimum factu videbitur, facies*,' has been construed 'this face seems to be made the best.' This is incorrect, but complimentary. Accuracy and

politeness are both lacking in the statement, 'You will make an awful man,' which has been given as the English of '*dira viro facies*.' Such words might be addressed to a Tartan, if that word means (as one boy said it did) 'an inhabitant of Tartary'; this is not the usual definition of the word, any more than a chaplet is 'a person who looks after a chapel,' or a publican 'a man who says his prayers in public.' In connection with public, it may be remarked that 'turned out of the public' is too colloquial a version of '*rapti e publico*.' It may have been one who resents such expulsion that represents the cruel Herod as getting the title of 'Tea-trark, because he invented or was fond of tea.' A greater familiarity with the Bible than with the Latin accidence was shown by the boy who, hearing another give *alius* as the genitive of *alius*, said to the master, 'Please, sir, wasn't there a good man in the Bible of that name?' He perhaps knew more of Elias than our other friend knew of Herod. If this answer showed fondness for Holy Scripture, another proved hatred for mathematics: 'Algebra is derived from *ἀλγος*, grief.' Anglomania is seen in its simplest form in '*usque*,' 'and we'; '*ne mentiaris*,' 'don't mention it'; '*stridens*,' 'striding'; '*pernicibus*,' 'pernicious.' The disease has reached a more acute stage when '*flagellis lacerati*' is translated by 'when they see the flags'; '*bestiarum dentibus necatus esse dicitur*,' 'the beast's teeth were made into necklaces.' Experience of unselfish treatment must have prompted a boy to turn the selfish and familiar statement '*me juvat ire sub umbras*' into 'he helps me to go under his umbrella.' The process might produce some discomfort, but not such as must have been felt by the man who 'lived in a door'; his position was worse than that of the lady whose dwelling was a shoe. The Greek author merely says, '*ἦνοιξε θύραν*'—the translator was a bit of an etymologist, who, having heard that *oikos* meant a house, fell into a logical fallacy. The same misdirected power led another to give 'makes a nest' for '*renidet*,' because *nidus* means a nest. '*Fungor*' means 'to perform,' but it does not follow that '*defunctus*' means 'deformed'; 'most learned' might be represented by '*doctissimi*,' but '*hominissimi*' is not the correct Latin for 'most men'; '*primum*' is 'first,' but you do not fairly translate '*at primum*' by 'at first'; *λίμνη* does not mean 'wine,' even though it may be expressed by 'port.' So an attic is usually high, but 'the Attic boy' may not refer to the 'topmost boy'; '*is*' is 'he,' and the objective of 'he' is 'him,'

as we all know, yet we do violence to the Latin tongue when we represent '*is liber*' by 'hymn-book.'

The Anglomaniac must have been suffering severely when he translated '*conversus in aquilonem*' by 'turned into an aqueduct'; perhaps he had been studying the 'Metamorphoses.' His friend showed an equal disregard for the niceties of the Latin tongue and for the movements of the heavenly bodies when he stated that 'the moon flies before the clouds splendidly.' The original statement was commonplace—'*luna fugatis nubibus splendet*.' Some simple sentences seem to bring on alarming attacks of the disease under discussion; at times these learned doctors disagree—error is manifold. '*Quid Milonis intererat interfici Clodium?*' is the question: 'While Milonis was dying he killed Clodius,' says one; 'Why did Milo agree to kill Clodius?' asks another; 'What was the matter with the millions that Clodius should interfere?' inquires a third; 'What millions perished at the killing of Clodius!' exclaims a fourth in horror. A like variety is to be found in the translation of '*repente viso filio oppressa gaudio exanimata est*': 1, 'Having seen the repented son, I rejoice'; 2, 'By the repentance of her son her joy was suppressed, but now it is out of date' (*ex*, out of; *ata*, date?); 3, 'Thou repent, vicious son; the rejoice oppressed; he exanimated himself'; 4, 'By repenting of seeing her son, she was oppressed by a gaurdian (*sic*) and was killed.'

After these violent outbursts, we will restore tone to our system by specimens of milder madness. '*Quid latet?*' 'Why is he late?'; '*de improvviso*,' 'concerning provisions.' In construing '*de pace*' 'about a mile' the young scholar tried to avoid 'concerning,' against which his master waged war, and to disguise the presence of Anglomania; he would have liked to translate '*pace*' by 'pace,' but thought 'mile' a judicious synonym. It may have been out of compliment to the aforesaid master that another boy changed '*ampla domus sæpe domino dedecori fit*' into 'a large house is often decorated by the master.' A memory of stern discipline must have induced another to do such violence to the Latin as to make '*imperio retineret*' mean 'the command of his retinue.' Can it have been the recollection of corporal punishment—which has long been out of date—that led a boy to translate '*condunt sidera*' 'they beat upon their sides'; and was he thinking of the parental grief at the sight of the traces of that punishment when he gave 'the parents tear their hair' as the

English of '*parent crinesque resolvunt*'? It must have been after reading 'the letters of the Bible' that one thought '*pecudesque locutæ*' to mean 'beasts and locusts.' Was this the fare of which his friend was thinking when he construed '*fedum exitu*' by 'food going out'? Dogs must have been in the mind of the scholar who wrote, 'they howl at comets,' as representing '*exulabant comites*'; he may have had a faint recollection of '*ululo*' and the attitude of dogs towards the moon.

A love of rhyme was the bane of him who altered 'quips and cranks' into 'quanks and chanks,' and of him who, having rightly joined '*quum* and *quominus*,' proceeded to combine '*dum* and *dominus*' as words that demand a subjunctive.

A slight misspelling may produce serious results: 'mild sauce' is a strange equivalent for '*leni fonte*,' but it is terrible when '*longius volvens*' appears as 'rolling father,' and '*ecce Jugurtha*' as 'low Jugurtha'; the character of the latter does not stand high, but the Latin does not warrant the use of the contemptuous adjective in that passage.

The insertion of a syllable may considerably alter the sense: '*omnes venumdati*' is not accurately represented by 'all had poison given to them.'

Sometimes there is confusion between a Greek word and a Latin word something like it in form. Instances of this are to be found in '*πορεύεσθαι ὀσινῶς*,' 'to walk like an ass'; '*πλην ἀνδραπόδων*,' 'full of slaves'; '*cava dolia*,' 'slaves in a cave.'

An observer of the heavenly bodies makes '*atris serpentibus*' mean 'seven stars'; another, with eye on Olympus, but mind on earth, having heard that the gods drink nectar, proclaims '*nec-turines*' to be their food; while a friend, with imperfect recollection of a former statement, declares that they eat 'ammonia.' In connection with eating, it may be observed that one youth wrested '*convivos avidas*' to mean 'lifeless birds,' while his neighbour, sitting in imagination before this delicacy, translated '*pars in frustra secant*' 'part they cut in vain'; *frusta* and *frustra* were alike enough for him.

Æneas was in evil plight when he was '*mæsto defixus lumina vultu*,' but the scholar exaggerated his misfortune when he described him as 'transfixed through the eye with a javelin to the wall'; even Polyphemus was in less sore a strait. The translator must have been thinking of Æneas's eye under those conditions

when he gave 'watery machine' as the equivalent for '*æquata machina*.'

4. A somewhat servile devotion to a dictionary is evidenced by such expressions as '*cur pellem facitis?*' for 'why do you hide?'; '*qui radius?*' for 'who spoke?'; '*desquamare murum*' for 'to scale a wall.' '*Tergum da*' suggests leap-frog rather than restitution; '*ego et tu sunt putei*' does not fairly represent 'I and you are well'; *gallus* is a cock and *corvus* is a crow, but '*corvus galli*' is not equivalent to 'cock-crow.' '*Dum tranquillus juvenis*' for 'while still a youth'; '*morti posuit*,' 'he put to death'; '*intelligere dor*,' 'I am given to understand,' fall under this same category of error. One boy stated that a woman 'wept 120 gallons of tears'; this seemed unlikely. The Greek was '*δακρύων εἶχεν κόπον*.' On turning to Liddell and Scott, it was found that *κόπος* sometimes meant a dry measure of the above-named capacity. The ingenious youth had passed over all the usual meanings to choose one that bordered on the absurd. Like ingenuity was shown by one who translated—for a pentameter—'the cloud, which was before, flies' by '*nubes, quæ fuit ante, muscas*.'

We will conclude with different translations of a simple sentence. '*Pyrrhus Romam legatum misit Cineam virum præstantissimum*': 1, 'Pyrrhus, a Roman legate sent to the Crimea standing for strength'; 2, 'Pyrrhus was sent to Rome to read to Cineas, a very Protestant man'; 3, 'Pyrrhus, the Roman lawgiver, sent to Cyprus a man's reward'; 4, 'Pyrrhus sent a Roman having red' (*sic*); 5, 'Pyrrhus sent a Roman legion to China, or, a Chineaman to Rome.' What misplaced ingenuity! *Ohe jam satis!*

TRAITORS' HILL.

WE are standing upon an ancient grassy tumulus on a gentle hill lying among other hills, larger than this, but still of modest elevation. We are almost within hearing of a great city, yet not quite. By the common figure of speech we can hear the murmur of the city's uproar, but, in point of fact, there is no longer any uproar in that city, but only a rumble of carriages, the sound of which does not reach nearly so far as these hills. The mound is circular in shape, not so high as the 'Castle' at Cambridge or the Keep Mound at Carisbrooke, yet well-formed and clear, and running round it there is a fosse with its earthwork, not so deep as the ditch on the Herefordshire Beacon, or that at Danesbury on the Quantocks, or that around the Camp at Dorchester, or that of the Wans Dyke, but still a respectable excavation. The mound is about a hundred and twenty feet in diameter within the ditch—a flat grassy surface on which are standing five tall Scotch firs and a sycamore—why, or by whom these were planted one knows not. Perhaps they are symbolical of something. They are the only trees on the hill. If you look north your eye is carried across a gentle declivity to a hill beyond, on which there stands a noble wood. Among the trees, but hidden by them, is a great house, once the residence of a great law lord. This wood is beautiful all the year round—at the bursting of the buds in early spring, when the leaves are yet young and of their early chlorine hue, not yet massed in foliage, but each clear and distinct, like a flower; when the chestnuts are in blossom and the hawthorn is in flower; in the full summer of July, when the foliage is so heavy that it fills the wood with great blacknesses; in the autumn, when for the red and yellow, the gold, crimson, and vermilion of the leaves, the wood is more splendid than that forest above Niagara, where the maples stand thickly upon the slope even to the very edge of the rushing water, and in autumn make a gorgeous bank or hill of colour to meet the western sun. Among the roots of the trees in this wood bubbles forth a spring, full and abundant. They have gathered its waters by artificial dams into reservoirs, one below the other. On the east of the hill rises a higher elevation still, clothed with trees, and on its highest crest there stands a city, as if planted there after the manner of the ancients, and as windy

Troy, Jerusalem, Edinburgh, Stirling, Durham, and a thousand other cities have been built for the greater safety of the people, clustered round a fort upon a hill-top. The houses of this city are buried in trees so that you can only see some of the roofs, and a tall church spire rises over all. Turning to the west one sees exactly the same thing repeated. Another city on another hill, with more trees, and another tall church spire. Thus is history repeated. On the south side there is a gentle descent, at the bottom of which is a ditch planted with trees; then a small, undecided kind of rising ground; then another gentle dip, and then a large and well-formed hill bars further view. From that hill, however, anyone who rises early enough on a fine summer morning may be rewarded with a very remarkable view. He will see before him countless spires and towers, and a great river crossed by many bridges, an ancient castle, the masts of many ships, and miles of streets, so that, like Xerxes, when he surveyed his multitudes, he will probably be moved to sit down and cry. There is another remarkable thing upon this hill which he will certainly omit to see, unless his eyes have been previously trained. There is, in fact, another barrow or tumulus upon its top. It is much larger than the first, but not so well defined; yet when it has been once pointed out, the ditch can be clearly traced all round it, with what seems to have been an earthwork bridge across it.

Between the tumulus and the western hill there are brickfields, the smoke of them ascending continually, a labour offering, to the skies; the smell of them, when the wind sets in a favourable quarter, remindeth one that labour is a curse; the voices of the simple swains who make these bricks may, for aught we know, be always singing hymns of praise as they mould the plastic clay—the earliest sculptors were, without doubt, brickmakers. We cannot, however, hear their talk or catch their hymns. Lying to the north of the brickfields are sloping meadows, where there is a little sluggish stream running over a marshy bed, crossed by a low stone bridge and a tall brick bridge, and ending in a pretty little sheet of water where, in the summer, boys of meditative disposition angle with rod and float. You may gather, on the banks of this stream, anemones in April, with marsh mallow, and, later on, buttercups, with, for your still room, betony, which gives tone or a fillip to the system; golden rod, good for open, and bleeding wounds; willow herb; valerian; and many other useful simples. The Apothecaries' Company used to come here, formerly,

once a year for an outing and a botanical ramble, accompanied, let us hope, by a dinner at the Upper Flask or the Wells Tavern. Does the worthy Company still continue this scientific expedition? If so, I fear they go further afield. Yet the herbalists are by no means an extinct race; you may cure all the diseases that flesh is heir to by going to one or two shops that I know. But they no longer belong to the Apothecaries' Company, and they generally belong to the other sex, and of most it may be said that it is now forty or fifty years since their beauty was the talk of the town. Beyond the brickfields, to the west, is a narrow space, forming an open common, on a hillside edged with willows, beginning and ending with ponds.

The place on this morning—which is a cold, bright day in what ought to be early spring but is really late winter—is perfectly calm and peaceful. There is, at our feet, a public pathway leading from the hill-top city in the east to the hill-top city in the west. No one walks upon it this morning but an old gentleman with rounded shoulders and gold-headed stick, who goes slowly, as one in meditation. Such as this old gentleman one regards with a kind of envy and admiration. He has Retired. To Retire is the dream of the shopkeeper. Will it be ever granted unto us to Retire—to do no more work, to walk among gardens and trees, the day's work over, satisfied to let the younger men carry on the world, contented, it may be, with our own share; perhaps impatient because our record has reached no nobler level? Old age has many inconveniences, no doubt; yet there is a time—would that it were longer!—when, from the outside, at least, we seem to look upon a period of serene wisdom, unmoved by the little wrangles of the day, hopeful and sympathetic. Let us hope that yonder old gentleman has entered upon this period, and is greatly respected, therefore, by troops of grandchildren. Perhaps, however, he is only meditating upon the massive fortune upon which he has Retired, and is gathering consolation in his declining years from the thought that he will eventually—to use the feeling and tender language of the City—be found to 'cut up well.'

The cold, clear sunlight falls upon the woods, where the leaves have not yet begun to show, and the buds have not yet even lost the purple hue of mid-winter. There is colour in the trunks, a thing you may vainly look for in London squares, where the trunks of the trees are all black; there are yellow mosses on the branches; the sunshine seems to separate each tree and make it stand forth from

its fellows. I do not know that I have ever seen these effects of a clear winter or early spring day produced in any picture. It must be a very bright day to bring out these effects, when the sun has acquired some power; then you will see, especially in a hanging wood upon the side of a hill, that the sun singles out each tree, as your eye falls upon it, separating it from its neighbours, as if these were in the background. You may mark this effect very well, if you choose to go there in the winter, along the valley of the Wye above Tintern, or on the Thames above Maidenhead; or, if you please, from this place upon the tumulus. On the slopes around, the sunlight, which shows no favouritism or partiality, falls likewise, drawing gentle undulations unsuspected in cloudy weather, and tracing over the grass curves unequalled by those of the finest mathematician. A lark sings in the sky above us. Very likely he is visible to some; there is consolation, however, to the short-sighted in the greater mystery of such things as the song of the unseen bird overhead. From the woods arise the voices of thrush and blackbird, and what they used to call, in the old days, massively, the 'Warbling of the Feathery Quire.' That was in the good old days when a bird was a bird, and there was no need to distinguish scientifically, as one must do now, between the note of a blue tit and a chiff chaff—that of a robin and a hedge-sparrow. In those days, too, a clump of trees was just a Bosky Grove, and no one had to mark the differences between the leaves of one tree and those of another. In the month of June if you come here again (it is much more pleasant in the month of June) you will hear the nightingale. He sings in these woods by day as well as by night, and he does not complain at all, but rather rejoices loudly.

Except for the birds, it is so quiet here that one might as well be on Hamildun, which is in the middle of Dartmoor, or beside Easedale Tarn, among the mountains which rise above Grasmere, and at a season of the year before they have opened, or after they have closed, the little cabin planted in the loneliness for the refreshment of the tourist and the tripper; or, for the peacefulness of it, we might be standing on what I take to be the loneliest spot in all England, that is to say, the quaggy platform which crowns the Cheviot. It is so peaceful that the rack and worry of life fall from the mind and are forgotten; one feels, standing here, far from the madding crowd; one listens for the far-off tinkle of the sheep-bell on the mountain-side; one expects to hear the singing of the mountain breeze in the ears. At what elevation does that

singing or whistling begin? Certainly one hears it not on the heights of Primrose Hill, nor on the top of the Monument; and yet in Lakeland, directly one gets above the level of the farms, and can look down upon the trees beside the stream, that whistling always begins. I think that the real mountain air, the only air which can thus sweetly convert the human ear into an Æolian harp, refuses to leave its own heights and valleys, and is independent of elevation, but hates the towns and houses. At Malvern, for instance, where the town climbs a good way up the hill, the mountain air recedes higher up as the houses advance, yet it is felt quite low down upon the opposite slopes which look towards the city and cathedral of Hereford.

Here there is no far-off tinkle of the sheep-bell, and there is no singing of the mountain air. For this green hill, if you please, and the hills which stand around it, and the tumulus, and the brooks, and the hanging woods, are all within the four-mile radius of Charing Cross. They belong to the suburbs of London, and lie between Highgate, which is the City on the east of us, and Hampstead, which is the City on the west. The woods before us are all that remains of the great Middlesex Forest, where the citizens of London had once the right to go a-fowling. They have the right still, no doubt; but there are no longer any fowls. It is now called Ken Wood; the green slopes beyond the brickfields are that part of Hampstead Heath known as the Vale of Health. It is the less beautiful of the two divisions, but the West Heath, with its broken ground, its little hills and valleys, its gorse and heath, is practically unknown to the Londoner, and even on Bank Holiday is comparatively deserted. Yes, we are within easy reach of London. Just beyond the southern hill there is a railway station; lines of omnibuses run into the City; all the people who live in the neighbourhood make their living in London; the place is a part of the Great City, and just south of it begin the dreary and monotonous suburbs of Camden and Kentish Towns, Holloway, and Somers Town. On a fine Sunday morning, or on summer evenings, these slopes are crowded with people taking the air, as they used to say; that is to say, they sit about upon the grass and talk; the boys and girls laugh and make those jokes which are well known and expected, and can be laughed at readily, without the exertion of thought which a new and unexpected epigram requires; the young men and maidens keep company soberly. They do not, as I have ascertained by the meanness of listening, make passionate

love to each other, nor do they search for pretty conceits, sweet exaggerations, and the feigned madness of poets in order to express and to excite the ardour of love in each other's bosom. Rather does the young man speak calmly and prosaically of his weekly 'screw,' and the maiden recounts the wrongs and indignities of the work-room. But in this way they somehow get to love each other, and I fear they marry too soon and have more children than is good for their happiness. As for the elders, there is more political conversation to be heard on this hill on a fine summer evening than ever one used to hear a hundred years ago in a London coffee-house.

Alas! we are all here on sufferance. We may look each other in the face and tremble. For the foot of the builder is already approaching us: but a little while and he will have built over all these hills; a dreadful row of grey brick cottages shall stand upon yonder barrow, and a greengrocer's shop shall occupy the site of this ancient tumulus where now the Scotch firs stand and the lark sings overhead. And where shall we go, then, we poor clerks, with our great families of children who live in Camden Town the Unlovely, and Kentish Town the Unblessed?

It is not enough that a place is beautiful. That has not saved fair Belsize, with its stately elms. Or that a place should have ancient associations. These have not saved the Roman camp of Saint Pancras, or that of Highbury, or that of the White Conduit House.

While we are still striving to save these fields for ourselves and for our children, let us recall some of the associations which make them remarkable.

The tumulus itself has no local name that can be discovered; it is not even marked in Roque's map of London (1745); its very existence is unknown and unsuspected by the thousands who walk about these hills in summer evenings—to be sure, the word 'barrow' or 'tumulus' would convey very little meaning to most of these worthy folks. There is, however, a tradition connected with it mentioned by Howitt, in his 'Northern Heights of London.' There are also two names and a little chapter of history connected with the Southern Hill. In a couple of very interesting papers contributed to the 'Athenæum' some time ago (Nov. 17, 1883, and Jan. 26, 1884), Professor Hales, of King's College, dealt with these traditions and their bearings, and made it for the first time manifest that we have here to do with ancient monuments and historical

associations of the greatest interest. I am permitted by him to use these investigations. Perhaps not all the readers of the CORNHILL see the 'Athenæum,' and those who do will suffer, not unwillingly, to be reminded of a paper which they may have forgotten.

First as regards the tumulus. Howitt's legend is that once upon a time the inhabitants of St. Albans, being jealous of London, set forth with intent to destroy it; that the Londoners turning out met their enemies here and valiantly defeated them, and that the mound contains the dust of the slain.

Was such a thing ever possible? It was once possible, within certain limits of time—say, during the first century before Christ and the first half-century after. When Cæsar invaded Britain (B.C. 55), internal war was prevailing through the aggressive policy of Cassivelaunus, King of the Catuvelauni, and especially between that tribe and the Trinobantes. Now, the capital of King Cassivelaunus was the city of Verulam, and one of the principal towns of the Trinobantes was London. As the former folk held Western Middlesex and a part of Hertfordshire, and the latter the rest of Middlesex with Essex and part of Hertfordshire, the common frontier was of great length. In the year 55 B.C., or shortly before it, the Catuvelauni fought with and slew Imanuentius, the Trinobantine king, and drove his son Mandubratius into exile, and so far reduced and humbled the Trinobantes that they threw themselves under Cæsar's protection. 'With Cæsar's departure,' the Professor writes, 'it would seem that Cassibelan became as injurious as ever, and that his successor (probably Tasciovan), was not less aggressive. The successor of this Tasciovan was probably Cunobelin, Shakespeare's "Cymbeline." The memory of some battle in this long raging warfare may probably enough be preserved in the tradition attached to the barrow still to be seen near Hampstead Heath. One may well suppose that it was a battle of special note and importance since it made so lasting an impression on the popular mind, and we may very plausibly conjecture that it was the very battle in which fell King Imanuentius himself. Looking at the lie of the country from the southern hill, we might suppose that the invaders had advanced from the North through the dip between the Hampstead and Highgate hills, and so entered the valley of the Fleet, and were making for London, when the Londoners marching up that valley met them at this spot, and dyed the stream with their own and their enemies' blood. Standing on the barrow and looking north one may picture very well the rush of those fiery Britons down the slopes, and the

hand-to-hand encounter in the valley.' The woods were there as they are, to this day, climbing up the hill; in the open glades wild bulls roamed and deer grazed, and in the recesses lurked the wolves; the lark was singing in the sky; and when the battle was over and the St. Albans men had fled, and the Londoners had returned home, and the dead bodies lay upon the grass, the place was no more quiet and peaceful than it is to-day. Would it not be a thousand pities if this memorial of the long-forgotten fray were covered with a grey brick villa, or, perchance, a suburban shop?

The Southern Hill possesses two names. It used to be called, indifferently, Parliament Hill or Traitors' Hill, in the days when Kentish Town and Gospel Oak were not yet built. It is, I believe, generally known by those who now roam over it as Parliament Hill. The reason assigned for this name is a tradition that the Parliamentary generals planted cannon on it for the defence of London. But the fortifications do not seem to have advanced so far north. Perhaps, however, it was called Parliament Hill, because the members for Middlesex were once elected here. It is certain that at the beginning of the last century, before the hustings were removed to Brentford, the members for the county were elected at the open space which lies in front of 'Jack Straw's Castle' at Hampstead. But there may have been a time when the elections were held on this actual hill. If this theory cannot be maintained for want of evidence the name may have been derived from the memory of some older Parliament, whether Hundred-moot or Folk-moot. The latter of these was held twice a year, in May and October. 'The fact of there being a barrow on the hill,' says Professor Hales, 'does not render the moot theory less probable, but rather the opposite. Hills with barrows upon them and barrows themselves were, in fact, often used as moots. The old assemblies seem to have been glad to avail themselves of the reverence attached to such situations. A place where the dead lay—even the dead of another race—was not likely to be rudely disturbed.'

As regards the second name, Traitors' Hill, there is another hill in the grounds of Lady Burdett-Coutts, at Highgate, bearing the same name. So there is a Jack Straw's Castle on Hampstead Heath, and there was another a hundred years ago with its own traditions of that popular hero, farther east.

The common story concerning the origin of this name is that the place is so called because Guy Fawkes's friends stood here to watch the Houses of Parliament fly into the air. But this

tradition cannot be received, for the sufficient reason that none of them ever came here to watch the blow-up at all, and that at the time when the conspirators had hoped to see, or hear, King, Lords and Commons all rising swiftly and unanimously into the air, they were constrained to be riding along the roads, already a good way from London, and anxious only to increase that distance. But Professor Hales suggests another and a much more probable association of this hill with traitors, in a little episode of the year 1661, which is, perhaps, not so perfectly fresh in all our memories. When I mention the name of Thomas Venner, the wine-cooper, does everyone know what is coming next? For my own part, I confess that I had clean forgotten—if I had ever read it—the fatal history of this misguided wine-cooper and his friends until I read Professor Hales's paper.

He says: 'In January 1661, for half a week, these parts were the headquarters of a gang of traitors On January 6, Thomas Venner, the wine-cooper, and his crew issued from his conventicle in Coleman Street, and with a blasphemy not intended, no doubt, raised the standard of King James as against King Charles. After marching up and down several streets and killing one or two persons, they "hastened to Cane wood, between Highgate and Hampstead, where they reposed themselves for the night." In fact they reposed there three nights. On Wednesday, the unhappy bigots ventured into London again and were in no long time finally suppressed. And a few days afterwards, Venner and another (one Hodgkins), were hanged, drawn, and quartered over against the meeting-house, from which they had marched forth in their frenzy less than a fortnight before.'

It is suggested, therefore, that these were the traitors whose memory was perpetuated in the names of the two North London hills, the first of the northern heights. The rising caused a panic quite out of proportion to its true strength and importance. It may very well be, therefore, that the fact of the insurgents encamping on these hills should be commemorated by the name of Traitors' Hill.

These are the more ancient associations of the spot. We have the battle between the Londoners—always a pugnacious race—and the St. Albans men, on the slopes between the Tumulus Hill and Traitors' Hill: there is the raising of these barrows on both hills, but as for when or why they were raised, no man knoweth: there is the meeting upon this hill of the Folks' moot twice a year:

perhaps the election, in later times, of the county members ; and the three days' camping out—a cold business it must have been—of the misguided wine-cooper and his friends before they were captured and treated in a manner which, when we revive it, will certainly tend to mitigate the zeal of our modern traitors. We may also, if we incline to be sentimental, fondly imagine that this would have been the chosen spot where Catesby and his friends, the dynamiters of the period, would have assembled to see the explosion of their great fireworks, had things taken a favourable turn, and had the Solomon then upon our throne been less sagacious. On the same principle, the faithful Russians, when they pilgrimize to Jerusalem, kiss the stones which 'would have cried out.'

As for the modern associations of these fields, they are many, and too numerous and too well known to be dwelt upon. They are shared with the recollections of Hampstead and of Highgate. Here wandered Keats, Shelley, Leigh Hunt, and Coleridge : here, in an earlier generation, walked Addison, Steele, and Pope. Here lived Akenside and Johnson. There is no end to the literary interest of Highgate and Hampstead. But sacred associations will not save the fields. Nothing will save them but money, and money can only be obtained by appealing to the humanity of the age in behalf of those who have no other breathing space within reach. There is nowadays a great cry for humanity, and for more thought of the helpless. Yet foolish and heartless things continue to be done ; though—which is a great step—with a greater desire than heretofore to avoid publicity. Here, however, is a clear and definite thing before us. We have only to buy this field and to preserve it for ever, for the children's playground, and the recreation of those suburbs which have no other place in which to breathe the fresh air. It is by a strange and happy chance that while all round London, from Barking to Richmond, and from Hampstead to Croydon, all the fields have been swallowed up by the builder, together with the woods, and the streams and the glades and the pleasant places thereof, these alone survive, still sheltered from the sight of houses and the sound of streets ; as quiet as in the old days when London was contained within its grey walls looking out upon the Moor fields and the meadows of fair Islington, and when the 'prentice boy could stand upon the barrow of Parliament Hill and listen to the bells of Bow.

WALTER BESANT.

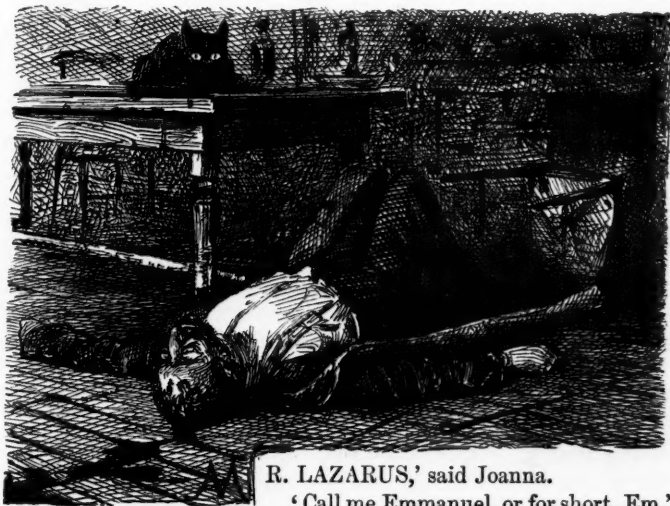
COURT ROYAL.

A STORY OF CROSS CURRENTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' ETC.

CHAPTER LVII.

RELEASE.



R. LAZARUS,' said Joanna.

'Call me Emmanuel, or for short, Em.'

'Mr. Lazarus,' said Joanna, disregarding the interruption, 'you will not proceed against Mr. Cheek.'

'Why not? Show me the reason. Didn't he shake me, and slap me, and bang me, and beat me with a stick? Didn't he burst the buttons off me, and nigh upon throttle me with my cravat? And didn't he tumble my teeth out and break the laces of my stays? Am I to sit down under all these provocations and bear them like a lamb?'

'I entreat you to pass this over. Do not appear against him.'

'No, no, Joanna. Do not try this on too soon. We are not wed yet, and when we are, you will have to learn that wedlock does not make a missus of you over me. Mistress of the house,

of the pots and pans, and the servant if we have one—though I dare say we can manage if Mrs. Thresher will come in charing—mistress over Mrs. Thresher if you like, but not over me. Do you know that every day I say the Berochos shel shachrit, and bless Providence that I am not born a Gentile, born a slave, and born a woman. Among you Christians the order of the domestic world is inverted, and the woman dominates over man and beast. It is not so with us. The Parsees have a very good custom. Every morning the wife falls down before her husband's feet and worships him. Even we Jews have not attained to such a pitch of enlightenment as that. In the Aisher-Yotsar every day we thank Providence for having made openings in us, eyes wherewith to see, ears wherewith to hear, nostrils wherewith to smell, doors these for the acquisition of information, and we pray that they may ever be kept open; and now, through these same doors to-day imbibe the lesson that, in this house, I remain master. In whatsoever capacity you be, whether as maid-of-all-work, or as pawn, or as wife, I remain above you, as the sun is above the earth. Your orbit is about me, not mine round you.'

Preparations had been made in the house for the change in the condition of the two usual inmates. Three upper rooms had been completely cleared of their contents, and they had been adapted for habitation. That commanding the street, immediately over the shop, was to be the drawing-room, another was furnished as the dining-room. In one way or another Lazarus disposed of a great deal of rubbish. He groaned over it, because he was losing money. 'This sofa,' said he, 'must go for twelve and three, and the cabinet for fifteen and nine. If I bided my time I might dispose of the sofa for two guineas, and the cabinet for fifty shillings, but let this loss of three pound four—say three guineas—be an evidence to my Joanna of the love and self-sacrifice lodged in this bosom. Love may well be described as a devouring flame; it consumes a lot of capital.'

The beds, the tables, chairs, wardrobes, uniforms, crockery were disposed of, and space made for the painters and paperers to get to work. The staircase was put to rights, the floors relaid. 'Though why the floors should be made pretty, when they will be covered by carpets, is more than I can see.'

On Saturday morning the Jew and Joanna, with Mrs. Thresher and her husband, appeared before the registrar, the two latter as witnesses.

'If I was to die intestate, and without a family,' said Lazarus, 'half of all I'm possessed of would go to the widow, and the other half to the next of kin, and it would take something to find a kinsman. But now I have made you to take all, Joanna, by my marriage settlement which Crudge brought here yesterday for signature. Which is another proof—if proof were wanting—how fond I am of you. Joanna, when I come to consider all I've done for you, how I have lifted you out of the dirt, so to speak, to make you my consort, and how I have scattered the contents of the three upper rooms, and how I have made liberal provision for you should you survive me—I say that, considering all this, I think there should be no bounds to your gratitude and devotion to me.'

The upper room, intended as dining-room, was prepared for the occasion of the religious ceremonial. In the middle hung a brass lamp of seven nozzles, the Sabbatical lamp, with seven wicks, which were all burning. The howdah, raised on four poles, a richly decorated canopy of red silk embroidered with gold thread, rested against the wall; on an ormolu marble-topped side table stood a large crystal goblet filled with purple wine. The day was not quite set, but the blinds were drawn, that the inquisitive people of the marine store opposite, who were well aware what was about to take place, and whose windows commanded the room, might be debarred participation in the ceremony. Directly the sun set, and the Sabbath was over, the Rabbi would arrive, together with some Plymouth Jews and Jewesses, invited to be present. For the occasion, Mrs. Thresher presided in the kitchen.

Lazarus was in high excitement. He had eaten nothing all day, as a Jew is required to fast on his wedding day. He was restless. He ran about the house to assure himself that all was in readiness. As the Saturday before a Bank holiday was one in which much business was done, he had sent Joanna into the shop. The opportunity of making something was not to be neglected. It took him some time to put himself to rights after the thrashing he had received from Charles Cheek. His shirt and his new cloth clothes, and his glossy dyed hair were all ruffled, but his temper was more ruffled than they, less easily smoothed. It was unreasonable of Joanna to ask him to forgive Charles. Who is disposed to forgive injuries on an empty stomach? Lazarus was heated, fretted, fuming, his cunning eyes sparkled with feverish light.

A small room on the ground floor had been cleared for Joanna as a place in which she could sit instead of occupying the kitchen. Hitherto it had been filled with goods. It was rather bare of furniture, and was uncarpeted, but then, as Lazarus said, why launch out into extravagance over a room no one would be received into?

The sun had set. Joanna was seated in this room. The shutters had been put up in the shop. There was twilight at this time of the year, and the girl sat in the window looking out into the street, in the twilight. The guests were arriving; the ladies in their richest dresses—handsome young Jewesses with splendid eyes, and elderly Jewesses gross and coarse; Jews in evening suits under their overcoats, with white ties, and white kid gloves, and waistcoats festooned with chains. The cohen had come, and had been received with respect.

Joanna would not appear till the last moment. She heard the trampling of the feet in the passage, and Mrs. Thresher's voice as she divested the ladies of their wraps. She heard the feet go up the steep stairs, and then the buzz of the voices overhead.

Polly Thresher was there, the daughter of the ham shop, a young lady who was barmaid at an inn, but who had come for the occasion to help. Polly was not an old bird, she fed on chaff; she gave chaff also. She was thought to be pretty, and assumed the airs of a beauty—a forward, fast young lady, accustomed to the society of the gentlemen who hang about a bar. She and a young Jewess were to be Joanna's bridesmaids, and lead her to the dining-room and the howdah, when all were arrived and ready for the performance of the ceremony.

Joanna sat by the window, looking wistfully into the street, without looking at anything in particular. She had her hands in her lap, folded. A hard despairing expression was on her face.

Miss Thresher put her head in. 'Oh my! not got your veil on, miss! The gents and ladies is nigh all assembled, also the minister, with a long beard.'

'Polly,' said Joanna, 'do me a favour. Ask Mr. Lazarus to come down.'

The good-natured girl nodded, and ran upstairs. A moment after the usurer entered the room.

'Heigh, Joanna,' he said; 'looking beautiful in that dress; wanting in colour rather. I wish I could persuade you to use a little rouge de théâtre. There is a make-up box in that cupboard.'

One always reads of a 'blushing bride,' and you look as though you had dusted your face over with blanc de perle. Put on diamonds. Don't shrink. The ladies upstairs have piled on all the jewelry they could borrow, and I don't want you to fall short. I've not made as much show hitherto as others, but I've made more money than any man in the room upstairs.'

'Mr. Lazarus,' she said, 'I have sent for you once more to entreat you not to appear against Mr. Charles Cheek. He has just turned over a new leaf, has left his father and entered an office—he is with shipping agents—and he lives on what he earns. Let him go quietly back on Monday. Do not stand in his way. I ask you this as a personal favour. I have not asked you many favours. This shall be my last. Will you grant it me?'

'No, Joanna, most certainly not. It is of no use your interceding with me for that scapegrace. It is a principle with me that no one shall touch me without suffering for it, and I am sure you would not have me go against principle.'

'I implore you, let him go! I will ask you on my knees.'

'No,' answered the Jew, 'I will not. Not now, and never.' Then he left.

'In five minutes we shall expect you,' he said, in the door. 'Miss Phillips will come down for you.'

She remained seated. Her lips moved. She plucked a little bunch of lily of the valley from her bosom, looked at it, kissed it, and replaced it. Then she folded her hands again, and remained motionless.

People passed in the street. Boys romped, women scolded. A cart went by laden with fish, then a wheelbarrow with whiting. Some sailors, half tipsy, drifted past, singing, squabbling. The lamplighter came to turn the gas and ignite it. She watched him, bending forward to observe how often he missed the tap. She put her hand to her brow; it was burning, but her hands and feet were like ice. She was in white silk, and beside her, over a chair, hung a rich lace veil.

Seven years ago, on that very day, her mother had brought her to the Golden Balls. Every circumstance came back upon her memory with vivid distinctness. Seven years of slavery, leading now to what was worse a hundred times.

'Fool that I was,' she muttered, 'to climb out of the water. Better have choked in that slime than have come to this. I have lived in hope, and now hope is dead. My mother has died, I know

not when and I know not where, and I was not by her to close her eyes and receive her last kiss.

Then she heard a tap at the door.

She stood up and threw the veil over her head.

'Are you ready?' asked Miss Polly Thresher and Miss Phillips, standing in the doorway. 'Everyone is ready, and expecting you.'

She turned once more with a face that darkened as though a fold of the coming night had dropped over it, towards the window, irresolute, unwilling to go.

At that moment she heard a voice, and her heart stood still. The voice was in the street and the tones were familiar.

'Here, lass! Thou'lt find t' bairn right enough.'

Joanna uttered a piercing cry, and dashed through the door, driving the two girls standing in it to right and left. In another moment she was in the street, laughing, crying, clasping a poor woman, whilst a burly skipper stood by, with his hands in his pockets, and chuckled.

'Mother! mother!' she cried, 'I knew you would come. I was sure you would not desert me. Only just at the last my trust gave way. Now all is well! Oh so well! mother! mother!'

The woman she clung to was indeed the same poor creature whom we saw in the first chapter of the story throw herself and the child into Sutton Pool.

She was thin, oldened, haggard, with grey in her hair, and a wandering look in her eyes, but the face was the same. Joanna knew her instantly. Her heart leaped towards her with a spasm of mingled joy and pain. The poor woman seemed quite as poor as when she tried to drown herself seven years before. She did not seem to have gained much more courage to battle with the hardships of life during these years.

Joanna drew her into the house, thrust the two young women impatiently, angrily, away, brought her mother into her own room, and then shut and locked and bolted the door against intruders.

Hastily she placed her mother in the chair she had recently occupied, and held her, looked into her worn face, then covered it with kisses and tears; clasped the hands, rough, soiled, wrinkled, and bathed them with tears, and dried them with her burning lips. Then she held the hands to her beating heart as though their pressure would lull its tumult.

'Oh, mother! my own, my own, my dearest mother!'

She could say no more, only repeat these words again and

again, and intercept them with fresh transports. Then she cast herself on her knees and threw one arm about her mother's waist and the other round her neck, and laid her own hot cheek and burning head against the bosom on which they had rested so often, and where they had found comfort in olden times.



‘Oh, mother! my sweet mother!’ she repeated, and laughed, and wiped her tears away against the poor woman’s breast. ‘Oh, my mother! my mother! God be praised! God be praised!’—and that was the first time Joanna had ever raised her heart to One above. Her joy was so great that it gave her soul wings for the moment, and carried her, unconsciously, on high.

When she became a little calmer she slightly relaxed her hold that she might look at her mother's face attentively, by the light of the street lamp.

'Why, my child,' said the poor woman, 'what is this! Why are you dressed in this fashion? Are you going to be married?'

At the same moment the girls outside tapped loudly, and Polly Thresher called through the door—

'They be all waiting, and Mr. Lazarus has sent down to know why you are not come up. Please be quick, miss!'

'Mother!' exclaimed Joanna, 'help me.'

She threw off the veil, and tore off the white silk dress and everything she had on wherewith she had been adorned for the marriage, and eagerly, with hasty fingers, put on her old stuff dress, patched and darned, and her house slippers.

'I am coming,' she said triumphantly to those without. 'Tell them I am ready.'

Then she threw open the door, ran into the shop, took the ledger from the desk, and catching her mother by the hand, drew her with her up the stairs into the room, where a gaily dressed and glittering party were assembled—a room brilliantly lighted—and drawing her mother after her, pressed forward, and threw the ledger on the table.

'Lazarus!' she cried, with exultation in her voice. 'My mother has come, and brought the money and the duplicate. Score me out! I am no longer Six-hundred-and-seventeen. I am free.'

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE LAST OF THE EMS WATER.

JOANNA was resolute. It was in vain that those present represented to her that she had been with Lazarus to the registrar's office, so that in the eye of the law she was already married. She refused peremptorily, absolutely, to go through the religious ceremony. She was triumphant, defiant. Her eyes were sparkling, her cheeks kindled. No necessity now for the make-up box and rouge de théâtre.

'I wouldn't be drowned, I said, this day seven years, and I won't be wedded now,' she said.

Everyone spoke at once. The cohen addressed her seriously;

Mrs. Thresher, who came up, overwhelmed her with reproaches. Lazarus stormed and screamed with rage, and insisted on her obedience to his wishes. But the time for submission was passed. As long as he was her master she had served him, in cold and hunger and rags. She had begged for him, bargained for him, fought for him. She had nursed him in sickness, she had guarded his goods like a watch-dog. She never had defrauded him of a penny. Now that she was free she would not be his wife.

She paid no attention to those present, their voices sounded in her ears, but she did not hear their words; she saw the persons that surrounded her as figures in a dream. One face alone was distinct before her—her mother's, one voice alone entered her ears and reached her brain—her mother's. Her soul was like a long-closed room, into which no light has entered; suddenly the shutters are thrown back, and the window flung open, and the whole chamber is full of summer sweetness and sunny splendour. Her step was elastic, flame leaped through her pulses and flashed in her eyes. She had recovered her mother, the only person in the world to whom she belonged, who belonged to her, the mother on whose lap she had lain, in whose arms she had been rocked, against whose heart she had cried herself to sleep, the mother who was the truest, most unchangeable of friends, the best of refuges in sorrow, the surest of counsellors,—she had everything now—everything of which she had been deprived for seven years.

Heedless of every circumstance, deaf to every argument, blind to every advantage, she drew her mother away. She wanted to be alone with her again, to hear her story and to tell her own, to sweep her away again in the flood of her overflowing love. She held her hand so fast that not for a moment could the poor woman disengage herself. Mrs. Rosevere was bewildered. She understood nothing of what went on about her, the lighted room, with the gentlemen in evening dresses, the ladies glittering with jewelry, the crimson canopy, the seven-flamed lamp, her daughter's strange demeanour. She was a timid woman with a mazed mind at the best of times; and this sudden episode completely distracted her.

Joanna brought her mother back into the room below, and fastened the door, but Lazarus had followed and was kicking and hammering at it with his fists, and swearing that he would have her out. He would not be insulted thus before all his guests.

Joanna remained quietly in her chair, clinging to her mother.

There was disturbance outside. Voices speaking in the passage to Lazarus, he answering in shrill tones, in accents of passion; the trampling of feet and the slamming of the house-door, and after awhile, stillness. The guests had withdrawn to laugh with each other outside the house, on their way home; Polly was with her mother in the kitchen, uttering exclamations of amazement and disgust.

When all was quiet, and the fear of being disturbed had passed away, then Joanna said, 'And now, my darling mother, tell me all that you have done and gone through during these seven years—and tell me why you did not come to release me earlier.'

Then the poor faded woman narrated a long story of troubles, beginning with her sickness on board Mr. Hull's boat, and how she had been taken to a hospital, and got better, and been discharged, and had gone into service and earned some money, which had been dissipated by a return of sickness. A story of recurrent toil and disappointment, of saving and scattering, of hope and despair. Joanna sat by her, holding her hands and pressing them, and when she heard how her mother had toiled she kissed her hands, and when she heard how she had been sick she flung her arms about her and swayed her, and sobbed and fondled her. Mrs. Rosevere went on to tell how that at last she had been able to gather together a little money, and how she had gone to Goole and had waited there, taking odd jobs of work, till she could find a boat which was going with coals to Plymouth, for she could not afford the railway journey; and how at last she had found Mr. Hull loading to go there—and how now, at length, she was back in Plymouth. The story took a long time in telling, for the poor woman was a rambling talker, who lost her thread and went on without it, and then picked it up at the wrong place and generally entangled it; but Joanna was not critical, she made out all she wanted to know, that the mother's heart had yearned through seven years for the child, as the child's heart had yearned seven years for the mother.

A rough tap at the door, and Mrs. Thresher's voice.

Joanna went to the door and unlocked.

'We can't remain here all night, you know,' said the old woman roughly, even rudely. 'We've got our own duties to fulfil—and a mussy it is some folks are found in the world who do their duties. Polly has to go back to the "Coach and Horses," and I've got my swearing old Radical husband to attend to. So we are off.'

‘Very well,’ said Joanna, ‘you can go.’

‘And I hope somebody will be ashamed of herself, and of giving people a lot o’ trouble for nothing, and of her ingratitude to the best of masters, and——’ Joanna slammed the door in her face. This did not interrupt or put a stop to Mrs. Thresher’s grumblings. She grumbled as she got into her bonnet, grumbled herself out of the house, and grumbled all the way along the Barbican to her own home, where her grumbling was drowned by the louder, more boisterous political grumbling of Mr. Thresher.

Joanna sat stroking her mother’s hair till Mrs. Thresher was out of the house, and then she began to tell her mother her own story.

She told the story with perfect frankness. She hid nothing from her. She told her about Charles Cheek, and the necklace and the pink silk dress; she told her about Court Royal, and described to her Lady Grace; she told her of how she had been caught, and was obliged to run away; she told her of the subscription ball, and then she told her how Charles had been there that day, had beaten Lazarus, and was now in the lock-up till Lazarus should appear against him. She told her mother also how that she had been about to be married to Lazarus, when, in the nick of time, she—her dear mother—had arrived to release her. Then she was silent for a few moments, holding her mother’s hand between both of hers, and hers twitched with nervousness. ‘Mother,’ she said, then hesitated; ‘mother—hush! does no one hear?’ She listened. The house was still. She did not hear the tread of Lazarus upstairs. Nevertheless she was not satisfied, she went to the door, opened it, looked along the passage, then returned, took her mother’s hand again between her own, and said, ‘Mother—I had made up my mind. I never could, I never would, be his. I would not have lived.’

‘What do you mean, dear?’

‘I should have destroyed myself.’

‘Oh, Joanna! Joanna!’ The poor woman shrank back.

‘Mother, when you were in your deepest despair, and you saw no light before you, you threw yourself into the water. I was driven to the last point of endurance. I could not, I would not, endure to be his wife. It would have destroyed all my self-respect. I thought how I could escape, and I saw no other way but this.’

The woman shuddered. ‘I did wrong, my child, very wrong, the Lord forgive me, a poor sinner. I was as one mad at the time.’

'I was not mad,' said Joanna, 'but in my soberest sense. I would never, never be his—I would die first; that was the only way of escape that I could think of. Mr. Lazarus is not a bad man altogether, and I have a kind of regard for him, he has his good points; but I cannot, and I will not endure him as a husband. Can you understand me, mother; a horror and loathing came on me—and, just as you came by, I was looking out of the window to say good-bye to the daylight which I thought I should never see again.'

'It was very, very wrong,' whispered the mother.

'I can't see that. I have two consciences, one pawnbroking, the other womanly. The first had no opinion about it, the other was very positive it was what I ought to do.'

'But how—oh, Joanna!' The poor woman shuddered.

'I had made my plans. Lazarus had told me to clear away a number of bottles of drugs and chemicals from his room. Among them was a stoppered phial of laudanum, and Charles had told me about that. It gives no pain when taken, but sends you to sleep, and you sleep peacefully away into the endless sleep.'

The mother, shivering and white, held Joanna away from her.

'What else could I do? Whither could I go? I had no one to whom I belonged and with whom I could find a home. I could not remain in this house with him any more as his servant after he had wanted to make me his wife, and his wife I would not be.'

Her mother was trembling as with cold—as she trembled on that same day seven years before when she stood in the same house, though not in the same room, and when she was drenched with sea-water.

'You may say—There was Mr. Charles Cheek. But, mother, his visit came too late. I had been already to the register office with Mr. Lazarus. It is true he had written to me two or three times, to tell me what he was about, but he had not said a word in those letters about wanting me to be his wife. And, even if he had, I must have refused him, because I gave him up to his father for a hundred pounds. Now, mother, would it have been honourable in me to take that money, and afterwards go from my agreement to which I had signed my name? No, I could not, much as I like Charles—and I do, I do like him. I could take him as little as I could Mr. Lazarus. I have a conscience. I have two—they may be queer to the fancy of some folk, but they are plain and outspoken to me, and what they say, that I do, and

no haggling and bargaining and beating down with them. So you see, mother, there was no help for it. I thought, when I made my plan, that if I took all the laudanum myself, master would find it out and fetch a doctor, and they would bring me round, so I was resolved to give him some of the laudanum also, enough to——'

'Oh, Joanna!' in a tone of agony and horror; 'not to kill him also?'

'No, mother, I had no thought of that. That would be murder, and no provocation would bring me to that. No. I thought if he should swallow enough to make him confused, and unable to understand what had taken me, that he would be as one drunk, and sleep, and wake when I was past recovery.'

Mrs. Rosevere wrung her hands, uttered a faint cry, and slipped out of the chair upon her knees, and pressing her hands to her bosom, said, 'My God! my God! I thank Thee that Thou didst bring me here in time to save the soul of my poor child.'

Joanna waited till her mother had recovered herself somewhat before she proceeded with her narrative. She drew her back upon the seat, and took her hand again between her own. Her face was earnest and pale now; it had lost its light and colour.

'Mother, the Jews have a ceremony at their weddings of filling a large glass with red wine, and the bridegroom sips this, then passes it to the bride who also sips it. Then he finishes it, and when it is empty he dashes it to fragments on the ground. I had to prepare everything upstairs, and I poured the laudanum into the goblet, and mixed it well with the wine. Then I purposed, when it came to me to sip, to take a long deep draught, leaving only just enough for Lazarus to suit my purpose. None would suspect what I had done. I would go away to my little attic room and lock the door, and lay me down on the bed and never wake again, and that would have been the end of my story, mother, had not you arrived at the proper moment, and for a second time given me life.'

'Joanna,' said Mrs. Rosevere, 'this is very terrible, and I cannot bear to think of it. God forgive me that I ever showed you a way out of misery. The Lord interfered then to save me from myself; and the Lord has interfered now to save you. Now, Joanna, to my thinking, there is no time to be lost, we must go upstairs at once and throw away the poison. It must not be left exposed another minute.'

‘Yes, mother,’ said the girl, ‘you are right. It is the last duty I have to do in this house, and it shall be done forthwith. After that we will go out and leave it, never to set foot over its threshold again.’

They ascended the stairs together. The door was shut. Joanna knocked. She received no answer.

‘Perhaps Mr. Lazarus has gone out,’ whispered her mother. ‘If so, we must not leave the house till his return.’

Joanna opened the door into the newly furnished dining-room. The apartment would have been dark but for the flicker of the seven-wicked Sabbatical lamp. Lazarus, governed always by the idea of economy, had extinguished the candles. The lamp-wicks burned badly, and the light was lurid.

Joanna and her mother stood in the doorway looking round. All at once the woman uttered a piercing cry, and staggered back. Joanna at the same moment started forward.

On the floor, under the red silk gold-embroidered canopy, lay Lazarus, as one dead, holding the empty goblet in his hand.

The girl raised him on her knee, tore off his cravat, and lifted his head on her bosom. He was breathing heavily. Mrs. Rosevere dashed water in his face.

‘He must be made to stand,’ said the woman. ‘He must be kept on his feet, walking all night. He must be forced to keep awake.’

‘Oh, mother, he has been fasting since yesterday at sunset, and he has taken this on an empty stomach. Hold him, mother, hold him whilst I run. I know what to give him. That was not sold—that will save him—the rest of the Ems water.’

CHAPTER LIX.

WITHOUT A WATCH-DOG.

MRS. ROSEVERE and her daughter had an anxious night with Lazarus. They were afraid to send for a doctor, lest he should discover what had been done. They walked the Jew about, and forced him to drink Ems water, and did not venture to leave him till morning, when they put him to bed in his old room downstairs.

He was obliged to remain in bed next day, and Joanna and her mother attended him. He was surly, and snarled at them.

He could not forgive Joanna. He received her attentions with resentment. He was ignorant of the cause of his illness. He supposed that he had had a fit.

As he got better he occupied himself in bed whittling a stick. On Monday, after he had eaten a chop and drunk a bowl of soup made for him by Joanna, and brought him by Mrs. Rosevere, he suddenly leaped out of bed armed with his stick, and chased the woman from his room, then rushed after her into the kitchen, where he fell upon Joanna, full of malice and fury, swore and cursed and threatened, and struck her over the head with the stick. 'Get out of this place. Never show your face in it again, you ungrateful minx. Eating me out of house and home. Oh, yes! Chops and soup! You can't stint yourselves when I am ill and unable to look after you.' Then he drove them out of his house.

As soon as they were gone he bolted and barred the door. He had refused to allow Joanna to take anything away which the girl might claim as her own. She had pleaded for nothing but the pot of lily of the valley, and that he refused.

When Lazarus had thrust Joanna forth, he returned to his room to dress. He trembled with anger, anger that had been simmering in his mind since Sunday morning, but which he had kept in control till he was strong enough to give it vent.

'I am well rid of her,' he said, laying aside his stick. 'Blighted be the day that I took her in. This is the gratitude I receive for having nurtured her in my bosom, a viper that turns and stings me. What is the world coming to? Where is morality left? Here is this girl that I have cared for, and instructed, and fed, and given my society to, turns my head, puts me to frightful expense, makes me sell off a lot of capital furniture at half its value, and involves me in bills to tradesmen for painting and papering, and carpentering and plumbing, turns the whole house upside down, and in the end—flouts me in the face of my own people, makes me ridiculous. Well said the Rabbi Nathan that Manoh was a fool, because it is written in the Book of Judges, "He followed his wife." For whoever runs after a woman takes leave of his senses.'

Lazarus wandered about his house looking at the changes that had been made in it, and groaning. The bills of the tradesmen had not come in. He would have to pay them. He climbed the stairs to Joanna's attic room, and found a malicious pleasure in

flinging her pots of flowers out of the window on the stones of the quay or into the water, hoping that she might be near to see and bewail the destruction of her cherished possessions. He found the photograph of herself and Charles Cheek. He had not seen it before.

‘That’s the way my money went! Oh, if I could but find a case on which to prosecute her!’ He tore the picture to pieces and flung it into the street.

There was nothing else in the room that Joanna could have called her own, on which he might vent his spite. He crept downstairs again. His legs were not firm under him, the laudanum or the Ems water had weakened him, and they shook.

‘I’ll have Mrs. Thresher to look in on me every day, I will. She is a sensible woman, and took Joanna’s conduct to heart. I’ll get her to let Polly come and mind the shop. She’s a sharp girl, and if I promise to deal handsomely by her, perhaps she’ll give up the bar and take to the counter. I’ll let that scorpion know that I can do without her.’

He wondered at himself, as he stood in the carpeted and furnished rooms, for having been induced to change his old mode of life. His object for many years had been to revenge himself on the Marquess. For that he had stinted himself; and when his opportunity was taken from him he had been unsettled, without an object for which to work and deny himself. Man must have some aim; when one is taken from him he finds another. When revenge was disappointed, love occupied the field. He had begun to dream of a happy life, such as he had dreamed of when he married his first wife. He had been disappointed in his first dream, now the second was dispelled.

‘I’ll send for Crudge to-morrow,’ he said. ‘I’ll see if I can’t have that confounded settlement altered. What a fool I was to have any at all, but I was infatuated. I thought, after all the marks of tenderness I showered on the girl, she must love me. What wicked ingratitude after all I have done! Her keep must have cost five-and-twenty pounds per annum, and she has been with me seven years, that is a hundred-and-eighty-five pounds—then her clothing. Why! I’ve spent on the minx two hundred pounds at the lowest computation—and now to desert me! What I have wasted on her would have brought me in ten pound per annum at five per cent.’

He fussed about his shop, now closed. He routed in the

drawers, he poked about in the kitchen, in the vain hope of discovering that he had been robbed of something by Joanna, so as to be able to take out a summons against her. He could not find that anything was gone. Darkness closed in. The wind piped and sobbed under the doors and in at the keyholes, and the rain drizzled against the window-panes.

'Ah!' said Lazarus, shuddering, 'a south-west wind blowing up Channel, charged with moisture. Twenty-four hours of rain. I hope Joanna and her mother are out in it, without shelter for their heads to-night.' He listened to the drip from the window-ledge, and the pour down the fall pipe. 'They were wet when first they came into this house; may they be as wet and shivery now they leave it.'

He groped for sticks to light his fire. He was unsuccessful. The art of making a fire is not in man, it is instinctive in woman. He either lays it or lights it wrong. Lazarus found out that he had to deal with a most intractable art. The sticks were too thick, or the paper too profuse, or the coals sluggish in kindling. A whole newspaper went in a flare without lighting the wood, and when the wood was kindled with the application of a candle, it refused to communicate its fire to the coals.

So he sat in the cold and dark, growling and miserable. Then he heard a scratching noise about him, like the uncurling of crumpled paper. He struck a match, relit the candle which had been extinguished whilst applied to the sticks in the grate, and saw that the floor was alive with blackbeetles, which fled in all directions when the match flared.

He left the candle lighted on the table, and relapsed into his chair, and into brooding over his wrongs.

He was dissatisfied with the prospect before him. He would never be able to replace Joanna. Mrs. Thresher was a voracious eater, and would expect her meals at his house. He would have to keep Polly as well, and he was doubtful whether Polly would settle into the business after the more lively experiences of the bar. He reasoned with himself that life with Joanna would have been a daily struggle. Set a beggar on horseback and he will ride to the devil; give a savage clothes, and a wardrobe will not suffice him. Translated from the kitchen to the parlour, from being in subjection to sharing the rule, she would have indulged in extravagance, have loved idleness, neglected business for pleasure. Then he thought of Charles Cheek; and he asked whether

Joanna was not really fond of him. How she had interceded for him! His picture taken hand-in-hand with her he had discovered in her bedroom. If he had Joanna as his wife, might he not expect a similar experience to that he had undergone with Rachel?

Then he felt again the sting of the blows Charles had dealt him, the shaking, the humiliation before the eyes of Joanna, and his blood rushed to his face. Charles had been in confinement since Saturday afternoon. On Monday, being a Bank holiday, no magistrate was sitting. Tuesday, at eleven, he would go and take out a proper summons against him. The police were not likely to act heartily in the matter. They knew Charles Cheek, and had received many a tip from him.

How badly the candle burned! What was that? He had lighted a wax candle from upstairs instead of a kitchen dip. That came of having strangers in the house! Mrs. Thresher could use nothing but the best for the kitchen. A curl of wax was formed at the side of the candle, folding over and over like a winding-sheet. No wonder the candle burnt badly, a thief was in it. Lazarus snuffed the wick with his fingers, and snuffed out the light.

At once, from all sides, came the rustling of the black beetles emerging from their holes and spreading over the floor. Lazarus fancied they were about his chair, scrambling up his legs. He stood up, shook himself, relit the candle, and ran about, stamping on the retreating insects.

How lonely he felt in the house. How still it was, like a house that was dead. A chill sense of solitude crept over him. What if he had another fit in the night. What if he woke up, feeling ill, wanting brandy, or to be bled, and no one was in the house to come to his help; and he was senseless or weak in the morning, unable to open the door when Mrs. Thresher came? But—would Mrs. Thresher come? Perhaps she did not know that he had driven away Joanna and her mother. Lazarus was alarmed. He went to the house door, and unchained and unlocked it, opened, and stood in the doorway, looking out into the doleful night. The rain came down like a fine spray between him and the lamp. The illuminated windows of the houses were surrounded by fog bows and magnified to stars of the first magnitude. Those persons who went by were buried under umbrellas. A rill ran in the gutter, spinning cabbage-leaves and stray fish-heads on its surface. He would get very wet if he went along the Barbican

quay to the ham and sausage shop. Besides, he was ashamed to appear there and confess that he was afraid to spend the night alone in the house. Mrs. Thresher knew nothing of his fit. That insulting old Radical, Mr. Thresher, would twit him with the events of Saturday evening.

As he stood in the door, doubtful what to do, something rubbed against his shin and stole past him. He looked down, but could make nothing out in the dark. He re-shut and re-barred the door, and went back to the kitchen.

'I will try again to light a fire,' he said; 'then I shan't feel so miserable and solitary. It is all Joanna's doing.'

He relaid the fire, and poured some paraffin over the coals. He was successful this time. The flames ascended to the sticks, the sticks crackled, and then with a leap the fire was on the top, the mineral oil was ablaze, and the coals emitted puffs of flame, and began to glow.

Lazarus was so occupied with the fire that he did not observe the presence of a black cat, watching him out of its green eyes, seated on the table. Only when the Jew got up from his knees and took the kettle to fill it did he notice the creature. He stood still, staring at it in surprise, holding the kettle in one hand. Lazarus had a great dislike to cats. As he looked at the cat the cat looked at him. In the dark the narrow slits of iris had expanded. The eyes shone like moonstones in the candlelight.

'Get out!' said Lazarus; 'I don't want cats here.' The monition was unheeded.

'Do you hear what I say? Get out with you!'

The cat rose and stretched itself, driving its claws into the deal of the table-top, and then resealed itself.

'Is that done to insult me?' asked Lazarus. 'What have you come here for? Do you think to hunt mice among my valuable china, and to kitten and rear a family among costly garments? Wait a bit, Yowler! I'll make you yowl!'

He took his light, and went into the shop to get a whip.

He laid hold of the stick that Charles had employed on his own back, and brought it with him into the kitchen. When he returned the cat was gone.

'Where the devil is the creature?' asked Lazarus, looking about him, and switching about with the stick.

He laid the stick on the table, and resealed himself in his chair. But he could now think of nothing but the cat. What

had become of the beast? Was it in the larder, getting at the bread and the butter, or the milk, or the mutton chops? He listened, but heard no sound save the drip of the water. Was it in the shop? Or had it got into his own little room, and was prowling among some Capo di Monte, Dresden, and Chelsea figures he had there? He took up the stick again. It was weighted with lead in the handle. If he had the chance he would bring that end down on the head of the cat and kill it. He held the candle in one hand and the stick in the other. He thrust the stick into every corner of the kitchen without dislodging his visitor. He peered into the coal closet, he searched the back kitchen, he examined the larder; the cat was nowhere to be found. Then he went down the passage to the shop. It was hopeless to expect to discover the cat there if it had chosen to conceal itself among the sundry objects piled and scattered through it. He held his breath and listened. Was that the cat purring? On tiptoe he crept near to the place whence the noise came. It was in the window. He craned his ear, then thrust forward the candle, and had it nearly blown out. A pane had been starred by a stone some time ago, and he had mended it with strips of adhesive paper from a sheet of postage stamps. One strip was loose, and the indriving draught fluttered it and made a sound like the purring of a cat. Then the Jew left the shop and fastened the door behind him, and explored his little sanctum. That door had been left ajar, and it was quite possible that the cat had entered. He sought it in every corner, under the presses, under the bed, behind the sedans. He could see nothing of it. He listened; he could not hear it. Yet the cat must be in the house somewhere, and when he was quiet, and fallen asleep, he would be startled by the gleam of the moony eyes, and a crash; the cat had upset and broken some valuable porcelain. He shut his bedroom door; he shut the passage door, and was again in the kitchen, and there, on the table in the same place as before, as though it had remained there undisturbed, was the black cat, watching him out of its lambent eyes.

‘I’ll have a watch-dog. If I have to pay fifteen shillings for one I will have one, if only to keep cats away.’

Lazarus was sly. He put the stick behind his back, and turned it in his hand so as to hold the slight end. Then he came towards the table step by step; he would not rouse the suspicions of the creature. He put the candle on the floor.

'Pretty! pretty!' said the Jew in a caressing tone. 'Will I hurt my beauty? Oh no! it is not in the heart of old Lazarus to do you harm. Do you want milk? There is some in the jug in the larder. What do you say to a herring's head? There are some in the sink. May I chuck you under the chin? May I scratch your back, you beauty?'

But the creature did not suffer him to approach without rising, setting up its back, and charging its tail and hair with electricity so that they bristled like the hairs of a flue-brush. The expression of its eyes was threatening. It half-opened its mouth and showed the long white teeth that armed the gums. Lazarus was afraid the cat would leap at his face, and he put up his arm to protect his eyes, thought better of his attempt, and backed, still watching the cat, into the outer kitchen.

'The black imp!' he muttered. 'I must make a way for it to escape.' Then he unbolted the back door into the yard, and left it ajar.

Having done this he returned to the kitchen. The cat was no longer on the table, no longer visible. Whither it had gone he could not guess. He was afraid to search, lest it should leap out upon him with extended claws, and flaming eyes, and keen teeth to fasten in his flesh.

'I'll have a watch-dog. I must—I will. If it cost me thirty shillings I'll have one to-morrow. As long as Joanna was here none was needed. This is another expense she is putting me to. Oh, I wish the cat would find her, and fly in her face and tear her wicked eyes out.'

He fetched a bottle of brandy from the cupboard, took the kettle from the fire, and mixed himself a strong glass. Then he drew his chair close to the stove and drank his brandy-and-water, listening for the cat, and cursing it, and then Joanna, and thinking he heard a step, and found it was the girl, with a cat's face, and flaming eyes, and a chain of Roman pearls dangling round the neck, and then—somehow the pink silk dress flickered before him, but the brush of the cat hung below it and swept the floor; and then the howdah upstairs began to dance by itself, and the Sabbatical lamp to swing as a flaming pendulum, all its seven jets alight as he watched it, and wondered whether it would swing so high as to unhook itself from the ceiling and come down with a crash and go out. He poured out more brandy, but was dozing and waking intermittently, and forgot to add the water, and the

loaded stick was on the table trying to lift itself on its ferule and dance, but the head was heavy, and at each effort down it came again with a bang.

So he slept, with feverish dreams, sitting in his chair, waiting for the cat to go out at the back-door, when he would lock it and retire to his bed, and then for a while forgetting why he sat up. The coals crackled and grew cold. The candle burnt down to the socket and dissolved all the wax, and the flame turned blue and danced over the molten wax.

Then—all at once Lazarus sprang up with a cry, and caught at the stick. Before him stood two figures. He could see their faces indistinctly by the flicker of the expiring candle—one a coarse face, marked with scars, and a heavy lower jaw. He felt the stick wrenched from his trembling hand, and after that he saw and felt no more.

On the following morning there was a stir at the Barbican. During the night the Golden Balls had been entered, robbed, and Lazarus had been found lying dead in his kitchen with his skull broken. A loaded stick lay at his side. On the table, purring and complacent, beside an empty candlestick, sat an ownerless black cat.

CHAPTER LX.

TWO PICTURES.

EVERY window of Court Royal is lighted up, and the terrace is hung with coloured lamps. Carriage after carriage drives up and deposits members of every knowable family for many miles round Kingsbridge, for the Cheek-Roseveres are settled in, and are giving their first soir  e of dancing and music.

The footmen in scarlet and buff are in the hall and on the grand staircase—scarlet and buff are the Cheek-Rosevere livery, because no more showy livery could be thought of. That of the Eveleighs was only buff and scarlet. The house had gone through a reformation under the hands of an art adviser and Oxford Street furniture dealers. Much of the old decoration was preserved but renovated; most of the good Chippendale furniture and Florentine inlaid cabinets, and S  vres and Dresden china, and the pictures of Morland, and Gainsborough, and Gerard Dow were still there. But everything was freshened up, the gilding

regilt and burnished, the colours brightened, the polished wood repolished. The curtains, the coverings, were all of silk or satin, and were new.

The state drawing-room was lighted by electric burners, the chandeliers had been banished from the ball-room. The old motto of the Eveleighs, 'Quod antiquatur et senescit prope interitum est,' was everywhere effaced and supplanted by 'Nil præstat buccæ,' which may be interpreted 'Nothing like Cheek. In the dining-room, over the chimney-piece, the Ducal arms had made way for the cognizance of the Cheeks, a unicorn, beneath which was inscribed 'Plentie of Pushe' as well as 'Nil præstat buccæ,' for the old scroll of the legend had been utilised, and two mottoes were needed to fill the scroll from which the lengthy inscription had been erased. Besides, as the family name was double, and the arms were double, why not duplicate the motto?

Some time has elapsed since the event described in the last chapter, and in that time great changes have taken place. The affairs of the Duke reached a climax; Court Royal was lost, and passed to Cheek of the Monokeratic system. But the Monokeros was too pushing and prosperous a beast to be resigned, and the old man remained at the head of the establishment in town, gathering in money as fast as he could, with both hands.

The old man's objections to his son's marriage with Joanna gave way when he found she was entitled to the whole of the Jew's fortune, amounting to seventy thousand pounds. 'A clever girl—a girl of the period,' he said; 'knows how to work her way to the fore. She would have been invaluable to me in my shop.'

Never had the state rooms of Court Royal looked so brilliant and beautiful as this night. Charles Cheek stood in the drawing-room receiving his guests. But we beg his pardon, he is no longer Mr. C. Cheek, but Mr. Cheek-Rosevere—he has assumed his wife's name in addition to his own. Every now, and then Charles looked round in expectation and uneasiness for Joanna, who was not present. Prepossessing and handsome, with his fair hair, light moustache, and pleasant blue eyes, he had a cheerful greeting for everyone. 'But where is Joanna?' he thought, and the guests looked round also, and wandered through the rooms in quest of their hostess. 'How very odd! Why is not Mrs. Cheek-Rosevere here to receive us?'

Presently, when all had arrived, a couple of scarlet and buff

footmen threw open a door to an inner room and boudoir, and in loud voices announced

‘MRS. CHEEK-ROSEVERE!!!’

Whereupon Joanna appeared, charmingly dressed in the richest pearl silk, and wearing abundance of diamonds, *holding a bouquet*



of hothouse flowers in each hand; she sailed, smilingly, looking very lovely, down the room, bowing to the right and to the left, giving a hand to none—how could she, holding flowers in each hand?

‘My dear Joe!’ said Charles to her after everyone was gone, ‘how could you behave as you did? It was rude—it was grossly impertinent, and we are such new comers.’

‘My dear Charlie,’ answered Joanna, with perfect self-satisfaction, ‘I know what I am about. Lady Grace could not have done it, and would not; she could afford to be condescending and sweet; her position was unassailable. On the other hand we are nobodies, who have risen to the surface through trade. We cannot afford to be gracious, or folks will say we are pleading to be received into society. We must be insolent, and take our place by storm.’

On the road from Teignmouth to Dawlish, a little out of the town, stand two houses in their grounds. The road is somewhat steep, ascending through red banks of sandstone. Presently a little garden door is reached, where there is a fork in the road, and over the wall of red stone can be seen a luxurious growth of arbutus, guelder rose, and acacia, and above the flowering bushes the brown thatch of a cottage, with bedroom windows peeping out through the thatch. By standing on tiptoe one can even look into the garden and see that the cottage has a verandah covered with creeping roses, and that French windows open into this verandah.

A little way higher up the hill is a more pretentious house in what may be called the Italian villa style; but the house is more than a villa, it is almost a mansion. The grounds are fairly extensive, the pines are luxuriant and of choice kinds. The insignis is grown there to a stately tree. There are glass conservatories. At the door stands a footman in buff and scarlet. The windows are of plate glass.

Presently an old gentleman, with hair white as snow, and an almost transparent, wax-like complexion, is wheeled into the garden in a chair, attended by an old bent man, leaning on a stick, and a lady, gentle and smiling.

We recognise our old friends, the Duke of Kingsbridge, Lord Ronald, and Lady Grace. Shortly after the Marquess comes forth, and the party descend the hill.

As they pass the little green door of the cottage, which sits, as it were, at the feet of the other, it is opened, and from it issue Mr. Worthivale and his daughter Lucy.

The united party proceeds to the walk along the sea-wall, extending for a mile, above the sands at low water and the sea when the tide is full. There they will be joined after a while by Beavis, who is in a solicitor's office in the town, and likely eventually to be taken into partnership.

Not all the estates of the Duke have been sold. Court Royal—dear Court Royal—is lost for ever. The manor of Kingsbridge is gone. Alvington, Loddiswell, Charlton, are all gone, but Fowellscombe remains—ruinous, indeed, but not lost—and Bigbury.

‘You may depend upon it,’ says Mr. Worthivale, ‘all we want is time. Penzance is used up. Torquay is done for. The aspect of Paignton is against it. The time must come when Bigbury Bay will form a crescent of glittering white houses, tier on tier—when the express from town will fly past Torquay, leap the Dart on a tubular bridge at Dartmouth, and rush past Kingsbridge to find a terminus at Bigbury, *the climatic resort of the future*. Then, your Grace—’

‘My dear Worthivale, I shall not live to see the first stone of the new town laid, nor the first sod of the new line turned.’

‘But, your Grace, what a comfort to think of the future, the refflorescence of this splendid house! I, also, may not see it, but I live in faith. Your grandchildren—’

‘Dear Worthivale,’ said the Marquess, ‘I am sorry to dash your dream, but I shall never marry.’

‘Nor I,’ said Lady Grace, in a low tone.

‘So the race will die with us. *Quod antiquatur et senescit—prope interitum est.*’

THE END.

